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ABSTRACT

This document consists of the six newsletter issues published during the 1994-1995 volume year. Intended for teachers and tutors of adult English as a Second Language (ESL), issues contain articles, book and materials reviews, letters, classroom techniques and activities, and announcements concerning the teaching of adult ESL. Articles address these topics: multilevel classes; student research; testing; online professional discussions; and literacy education; and a variety of classroom activities and techniques, including student "thought cards," closed-captioned video, lesson design for tutoring, creating an instructional idea file, question-asking, sentence combining, cultural awareness, classroom design, student minute-taking, famous quotations, and creating a class textbook. Reports of teacher mini-grant projects are also presented. A crossword puzzle for classroom use is included in each issue. (MSE) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education)

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Hands-on English

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Volume IV, Number 1 May/June 1994

Hands-on English

A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult English as a second language

On the market

Reviews of useful ESL materials

Vocabulary text

"Developing Vocabulary Skills, Second Edition" by Dennis Keen (1994, Heinle & Heinle Publishers, 1-800-354-9706). $12.00 (Teachers Manual $4.00) ISBN 0-8384-4672-8.

One of the hardest things to do in ESL is to find books that are appropriate for the needs of the particular students you have. That's why we try to present a variety of materials in this column.

The students who need this book are high intermediate to low advanced, with future academic goals. If we were teaching a class of "pre-academic" students—in an intensive program, say, or a community college—we'd make sure each student had their own copy of this book and work through the entire book from cover to cover over the course of a semester or two.

Aquiring English vocabulary is an overwhelming task, and you can't do it by memorizing lists. Stephen Krashen (author of many books and articles on reading and learning language) says you aquire new vocabulary by reading a lot and recognizing new words in their context, and we agree with this principle.

But we still believe it will help advanced students if they are able to analyze new words and put some of the roots, prefixes and suffixes, etc., into categories of meaning. The exercises in this book provide students with many of the tools they need to analyze new words.

There are some nice readings in the book, but don't expect most of the material to be presented "in context" with "whole language" activities—this is not its purpose. The book should be used as supplemental material to the other, more content-based materials your students are working on.

The glossary in the back of the books gives some word history and related vocabulary for each word element studied. If we were teaching from this book, we would probably emphasize this material, and perhaps expand on it, because we think it is useful for students to make connections between new words and words they already know (whether in English or in another language).

The exercises in this book are clear, useful, well-organized and even fun for the students. We predict that working through them will give your students more control over the new vocabulary they will be meeting in the years ahead.

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Hands-on English

Volume IV, Number 1
May/June 1994

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About the publication

Hands-on English is a small, independent publication that was started in 1991. The editor is a former ESL teacher who has taught ESL in many settings, including adult education programs, a refugee program, community college, and a university intensive English program. . .and survived to write about it!

Articles and ideas are contributed by experienced teachers and tutors, including our readers. If you have an article or teaching suggestion you would like to share, we welcome your input!

About the Minigrants program

Hands-on English awards a few small grants (of $100 each) annually for practical classroom projects. Applications are due April 30, and are available upon request.

On the road with Hands-on English!

(The editor, heading off to the March TESOL conference in Baltimore, MD.)

Letters

Lyrical letters

Here are two more poetic commentaries from our unstoppable readers:

"Hands-on English is really the best!
It really beats all of the rest!
With grab-bags and puzzles and
games, to add zest!
We can all pick and choose, what we
will put to the test!
It's *marvelous*, yes?"

– Cathy Forsythe, Lewistown, PA

"Not much money at our house
Maybe we can get it out of spouse
Love each volume that you send—
So cost of next year
We'll certainly spend!"

– Charleen Lyngstad, LVA Volunteer
Kalispell, MT

More about coining

"Concerning the article: 'Coining, Aspirin and ESL,' (March/April '94 issue) it is important to note that using aspirin in conjunction with a viral infection (ie., the flu) is not advisable. See the warning section on any aspirin bottle.

"As teachers, most of our students look to us as advisors, almost the same as doctors. With the potential of litigation so high, I would not recommend the use of any medication but would recommend the students to see a doctor.

"In Phoenix, the Child Protective Services is aware of the practice of coining. The Vietnamese community and the Refugee resettlement programs have informed them about the practice. However, individual doctors or school principals may not be aware of it."

– Phil Allred, Lutheran Social Ministry
Phoenix, AZ

Need holiday activities

"Dear Editor,

You're doing a great job!! Nevertheless I would like to see activities for the holidays, ie. St. Patrick's Day, Halloween, Valentine's Day. This would be most useful. Sincerely,

– Diana Kohl
Victoria, B.C., Canada

If any of our readers have holiday activities they'd like to share we'd be delighted to present them in ***Hands-on English****.*

Puzzler solved

Debbie Weger, Sal Parlato, and Dorothy Holmes, among others, all contacted us to say "Have a nice day." They weren't just being friendly though—they had decoded the message we printed in our last issue from a Spanish-speaking student: *Jabanaisde.* Any more puzzlers out there?

Poetry for students?

Roumy Boukova in Santa Ana, California wrote to ask if we know of any poetry books with poems adapted for ESL students at the beginning and intermediate levels. Do you know of any? If so, please contact us and we'll pass the word along.

and calls

New refugees

We recently spoke with Beth Easter, who teaches adult students in Minneapolis. She mentioned that her program has a group of new students—some Bosnian refugees. Their stories, she says, "would break your heart," but they are excellent language learners and highly motivated students.

She also reported that some of the Bosnian students speak Russian or Polish in addition to their first language (Serbo-Croatian), and get along very well with the Russian and Polish students in the program.

From the field:

Multi-level classes—they can work!

We received this inspiring letter from Betty Darden in Texas, and thought you would find it useful:

Dear Ms. Silliman,

I am writing to request the free combined index and also to tell you how much I have enjoyed your newsletter. Since my ESL class is multi-level, I have used your multi-level puzzles and activities the most. Please continue to provide as many of these as you can.

I remember reading sometime back in your editorial that you did not feel that multi-level classes were the best format for teaching ESL. Five years ago when I was teaching single-level classes on the college level, I would have agreed with you. Now upon completing my fifth year as a fulltime ESL teacher in an adult education class, I have changed my opinion.

Time is key

Because our school is small, and I am the only ESL teacher, by necessity I teach a morning and afternoon multi-level class. These classes meet for three hours a day, five days a week. Having this much time with the students is the key I think for the success of the multi-level class.

Some ideas

Since a reader had asked for suggestions for such a class, I will share with you what has worked very well for me. My students study at their own pace for half of each class period in Book I, II, or III of **Practical English** (published by Harcourt Brace ESL, 1-800-742-5375 for information). The last half of the class is devoted to group, pair, and various other communicative activities.

I base the class activities on the vocabulary lesson for that week from the Basic Vocabulary Builder (by Dorothy Liebowitz, National Textbook Co., 1-800-323-4900). Whatever activities I can find that correlate to the vocabulary, I use them. I am continually adding new activities and tossing out old ones as find better materials. Thus, each year is basically the same but different enough so that some students who stay a year to two years are still challenged.

Nothing succeeds like...

The best indication to me that this class is meeting the needs of ESL students is the success of those who have left the class. Some have stayed in my class while working on the GED and have passed it. Others have gone straight from my class to regular classes in junior college and have done well. Still others have been able to find a better job, which was their original goal all along. But the most encouraging trend to me is the continuous stream of former Intensive English "college" students who hear about this class and come to improve their listening-speaking skills. These students with very different educational backgrounds and levels somehow find what they need in a multi-level class.

Realities

I agree that ideally single-level classes should be the most successful at teaching English in the shortest amount of time. However, given the case that around the world more ESL teaching situations involve small numbers of students than not, I suggest that multi-level classes *can* be successful.

Thank you for helping me to be the best teacher I can be by sending me a first class periodical full of ideas and activities that I can actually use—even in a multi-level environment. I look forward to having the index so that now I can find those activities faster.

Sincerely,

Betty J. Darden
Cassata Learning Center
Fort Worth, Texas

Further resources

Looking for more help with multi-level classes? Many teachers have recommended this book:

Teaching Multilevel Classes in ESL
by Jill Sinclair Bell

(Available from Dominie Press, $14.95. 1-800-232-4570)

The book includes many suggestions for activities and exercises, practical teaching suggestions and examples.

Tools & Techniques:
"Thought cards" for writing and speaking

by Denise Selleck, instructor at City College of San Francisco, Alemany Campus. Her students are adults in an open-enrollment, non-credit program.

Thought cards are a wonderful way for ESL students to generate topics to write and talk about. I learned about them from a friend who teaches health education to native-language high school students.

A thought card is a 3x5 card on which students can write anything they want to: their beliefs, interests, goals, fears, a joke, an observation, a poem, a quote, a drawing, the weather, politics, sports, or religion. I used them in a low-intermediate conversation/writing class, but they could probably be used in any class from high-beginning on up.

How to do it

Set aside one day each week when students must turn in their cards. You can have them do it for homework if you want to, and use the card as a "ticket" into class. Or, give them 15 minutes or so to write at the beginning (or end) of the class period. Everyone must turn in a signed and dated card. If they can't think of anything to say they can write "I have nothing to say this week."

After collecting the cards, select a few to type up. I usually had six or seven each week. Try to vary the subjects and students you select each time. I also think it's important to keep the writers anonymous so the students can feel free to write about anything.

The next day or later that week, distribute a sheet with that week's thoughts, which you have selected and typed up. Read them aloud (or have students do it) and discuss any vocabulary they don't understand.

The first week may be difficult because students aren't sure about the process and are nervous about sharing. I gave a few personal examples that got them started (ie., *I am very worried because. . .*). By the second week, students will be comfortable enough to confide personal things on their cards.

Follow up

You can have students discuss all or some of the thoughts in pairs or in small groups. I often made up two or three discussion questions to go with each thought. You can do many other things depending on the nature of your class and the abilities of your students—you can have them focus on one thought and discuss it, or have them give advice (written or oral) about an issue. Another approach is to have them choose one thought that is the most important to them and have them write a response to it, or relate a similar experience they may have had.

When the next week's thought cards roll around, many people will make comments about something they discussed the previous week, or they will respond to someone else's thought. This provides some continuity in the discussions.

I kept all the cards until the end of the semester, and then returned them to the students to reread and comment on any patterns they saw in their own writing.

Why it works

Thought cards validate our students' feelings of self worth, because their own feelings and thoughts are being read aloud and discussed by others. Thought cards are good from a pedagogical point of view because students are working on vocabulary, conversation, writing and reading while expressing themselves.

To correct or not, that is the question

The first half of the semester, I did not correct the grammar on the thought cards because I felt that since it was the students' personal writing I should leave it be. Midway through the semester, however, some students started saying they wanted me to correct them What I did then was to clean up the grammar just on the handouts. On a second sheet I also typed up individual sentences from the cards which were grammatically incorrect and had students correct them in pairs. Used this way, the cards are a good grammar teaching tool.

Some sample student thought cards:

> I feel very sad. When I was in my country, I thought that U.S. was a heaven, but I was wrong. I can't find a job. When I go any place, they ask me, "Do you have any experience?" I just have been here for 3 months. I haven't done any job yet. How can I have experience? ... I really worry for my life. Now I don't know where I live—is it heaven or hell?

> My little son studies in school. He learns English very fast, but he can't know Chinese words. I teach him a word a day. I don't know why he is confused. Maybe someday the people laugh at him. Why doesn't a Chinese know Chinese? So I am very upset.

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Tools & techniques:
Closed-caption video for ESL

Helpful readers

The request from Jane Bailey for information about closed-caption videos we printed in our last issue brought us a flood of responses! Rather than devote an entire issue to this exciting technology, we decided we had to summarize for you what we learned.

Beneficial technology

Closed captioning was developed by a non-profit organization, the National Captioning Institute, primarily for the purpose of providing access to television for deaf and hearing-impaired people. The educational value of written captions for television benefits not only the deaf community, though, but illiterate and functionally illiterate adults, children learning to read, and of course ESL students of all ages.

Because all televisions made after July 1, 1993 will have this technology built in, eventually many more people will have access to the captions that are broadcast with most TV shows and can be switched on or off as desired. To get these captions with older equipment, you need the original "TeleCaption Decoder," a black box you hook up to your system. These can be purchased for about $125 where video equipment is sold—for example, Sears carries them.

"Open captions" are the same captions but can't be switched on or off. With the right equipment you can record something with captions onto a video tape, which can then be played on any VCR, whether it has a decoder or not. For classroom purposes, this might be a more inexpensive approach.

Resources

- For information about where to get a decoder in your area, and for more information about using closed captions with ESL students, write:

National Captioning Institute
5203 Leesburg Pike
Falls Church, VA 22041
or call: (703) 998-1530

- Video tapes with closed captions are available commercially, from libraries and video rental stores . Many ESL teachers have commented, though, that the best teaching material is likely to be short TV segments that you have recorded yourself.

Jeorgette Knoll from the Metro North ABE Learning Lab, Coon Rapids, Michigan, had great success with a TV program called *Rescue 911*, a William Shatner docu-drama. She wrote: "The students read the TV story sentence by sentence as the picture is paused on the TV. Tutors and students like the pace, the vocabulary, and the real life situations. The tutor often will preview the tape to pre-teach some of the vocabulary or idioms. It takes about an hour to read and explain line by line about 5 minutes of TV. This means that one TV program can be used for a part of several tutoring sessions."

- Sal Parlato tells us that if you have a deaf student in your class you can benefit from the government's program of Captioned Films and Video for the Deaf (CF/VD). They lend captioned videos or films free of charge to those qualifying. To apply, phone Modern Talking Pictures at 1-800-237-6213, or write them at 5000 Park Avenue North, Saint Petersburg, FL 33709.

- For a short summary of all the latest techniques in using closed captions with adult ESL students, contact the National Clearinghouse on Literacy Education (NCLE), Attn: Fran Keenan, 1118 22nd Street NW, Washington, DC 20037. Send them a self-addressed, stamped envelope and ask for the *ERIC Digest* on Closed Captioned TV. The digest is free of charge.

- Several people have told us that the best book for ideas on teaching with videos is:

Video in Action: Recipes for Using Video in the Language Classroom by Susan Stempleski and Barry Tomalin ($19.95 from Prentice Hall International, 1-800-947-7700).

- As we get more information from our readers about what works, we'll pass it along to you.

T.V. YOU CAN READ!

Special thanks to Jeorgette Knoll of Metro North ABE, Peggy Camp, D.E.A.F. in St. Paul, Minnesota, Sal Parlato in Rochester, New York, Joe McVeigh and the other nice folks on TESL-L, and Morgan Bramlet of NCI for providing the information for this article.

From the field:

Student research: the invention report

–by Eleanor Mills, ESL teacher at Memphis City Schools, Memphis, Tennessee.

It is always difficult to introduce ESL students to research materials. Even the most basic book or encyclopedia is a challenge because of their limited skills in reading English. This worksheet was designed for even the lowest level of ESL student, and can be easily adapted for other reports as well.

Working in groups under teacher supervision, every student can produce a report to be proud of. The reports are then posted about the room. The second worksheet provides good class movement and interaction—each student has to list all the inventions, inventors and how they improved the quality of our lifestyle.

Each student is also responsible for presenting an oral report about their invention, using the written sheet as reference.

Editor's note: Enlarge this worksheet on your copier, leaving plenty of room at the bottom for the students' drawings.

Name ______________ Date ________________

INVENTION REPORT

Name of invention: ________________________________

This invention ____.
(Tell what the invention does and how it has improved our lifestyle.)

____

____

Name of inventor: ______________________________

Inventor's date of birth: ________ Date of death: ________

Tell three more things about the inventor. ________________

____

____

Draw a picture of the invention:

2nd worksheet, for group work when the reports are finished:

Invention	*Inventor*	***What does the invention do to improve our way of life?***

Tools & techniques:
Getting online with TESLIT-L

by Carl Grove, Seattle, WA

I "talk" to people all over the world about issues in adult ESL almost every day from my computer, and you can too. It's easy, it's informative and it's really fun.

On Internet there are probably thousands of groups of people connected (or "subscribed") to what are called *lists*. A list is a distribution system that sends my message to everyone else who is subscribed to the list.

Issues in common

One list I am hooked up to is called TESLIT-L. All the people who subscribe to this list are interested in issues of literacy and adult ESL education. We frequently talk about teaching ideas, teaching situations (facilities, pay, policies, etc.), articles and books we have read or conferences we have attended. Lately our discussions have centered around how to get adult educators (including ESL) connected in order to create a more unified group of people in this field.

We (those of us on the list) would like to hear many more voices. What are your frustrations? What aspects of your working conditions negatively affect your ability to teach? What aspects of your working conditions positively affect your ability to teach? What are your successes? How can we act to counter the marginalization of Adult Education—both of the teachers and the students?

Getting involved

If you would like to participate in this ongoing discussion, you need to subscribe to this list. It's really quite easy. All you need is an electronic userID (also called an e-mail address), either on Internet itself or through a private service to hook you into Internet.

If you want to connect from home, you need a computer, a modem, and your telephone line. You also need to subscribe to a private service like CompuServe, Prodigy, America Online, or a local version of these services, usually for a monthly fee. Any of these services will allow you to send and receive e-mail messages through Internet, although their fees vary depending on how much you use the service.

If you work at a university, college or community college, you can probably get an Internet account free. Ask your local computer department about Internet access. Another possibility is to connect to a "statewide technology network" that is available in many U.S. states at a very reasonable cost, or free. (Ask about this at your public library.)

Joining up

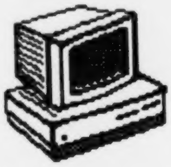
Once you are able to send messages to Internet, you will need to subscribe to a list called TESL-L (this the main list). To do this you send an e-mail message addressed to: LISTSERV@CUNYVM.CUNY.EDU (this is the Internet address for the computer that runs TESL-L). In the message you should write only: SUBSCRIBE TESL-L. Soon you will get an e-mail message back welcoming you to the list, and giving you some instructions for using the list.

Next, you should send another message to LISTSERV@CUNYVM.CUNY.EDU that says: SUBSCRIBE TESLIT-L. This is the Adult Education and Literacy sub-list of TESL-L, and the one you want to join to talk with other adult ESL educators. If you later feel you are getting too many messages by being on both lists you can turn off TESL-L but leave TESLIT-L on. Your instructions from TESL-L will explain how to do this, as well as other techniques for controlling the number of messages that come to you.

If you need more information on how to get hooked up to the list, send me a message. My address is: cdgrove@carson.u.washington.edu (remember to type in the address exactly as it appears). I hope to hear from you soon.

--Carl Grove, Seattle, Washington

NB: There are many publications that explain how Internet works. A couple of the best are "Zen and the Art of Internet" by Brendan Kehoe and a magazine called "Boardwatch."



Editor's note: Hands-on English is a regular participant both in TESL-L and TESLIT-L, and we are also happy to answer any questions we can for you about getting 'connected.' Our e-mail address is: 73651.1122@compuserve.com

If you're feeling isolated, this is the cure!

Tutors, too:

Putting the learner in the 'driver's seat'

The students choose

How can you let students direct their own learning? Here is a very simple way to do this, initiated by Ismael Rosario, a Teacher/Home Vistor at Clackamas County Children's Commission in Oregon.

Ismael works one-on-one with Spanish-speaking parents of Head Start children. He uses the *New Oxford Picture Dictionary* ($9.25 from Oxford University Press, 1-800-451-7556) as the basis for English language tutoring. Each family he tutors has their own copy of this topic-based picture dictionary. Ismael asks his students to select a page from the *Dictionary* that they wish to study and then bases the English lesson on the topic his students selected, rather than determining himself what the students *should* study.

Most of Ismael's female students chose food and the grocery store as their entry point to the study of English. Ismael then used teaching techniques such as Language Experience Approach, concentration games, and role play to teach vocabulary and language structures related to that topic.

A sample lesson

Here is one example lesson Ismael developed, based on his students'chosen topic:

1. **Choose topic.** The student chose the supermarket as a topic.
2. **Discuss picture.** They reviewed supermarket vocabulary using the *New Oxford Picture Dictionary*, with questions like: Where is the deli counter? Where is the produce section? What is in Aisle #5? How many cashiers are there?
3. **Compare to real situation.** The tutor asked the student to draw a picture of the supermarket where she last shopped, in contrast to the picture in the dictionary.
4. **Use vocabulary.** Then he asked her to describe the path she took through the store on her last shopping trip. For example: I started in... Then I went to... and I put...in the cart. I went down the...aisle.
5. **List items.** Together they made a list of the items she bought the last time she went to the store, and they talked about the sections of the store where she got each item. (To do this they concentrated on the past tense verbs "bought" and "got it in ___."
6. **Life-skills reading.** They looked at a receipt from the grocery store. He asked the student to find something that cost $XX, and how much certain items cost.
7. **Writing.** The tutor asked the student to prepare a shopping list to share with him for the next visit.
8. **Shopping strategies.** They discussed the benefits of planning, and of making a list of things you want to buy when you go to the store. They discussed strategies for saving money—coupons, buying items on sales, etc.

Variations

This approach works well with any level of student because within one topic you can vary the activities according to the student's level. In his work, Ismael did a lot of different things with different level students—the possibilities are endless.

Why it works

By having students determine what they want to study, and by bringing the learners' own experiences into the lesson, you are customizing the learning for their individual needs.

Giving your students some control over the lessons will make them more active and more powerful learners. Instead of just "receiving" what you are teaching them, they are actively involved in getting what they need out of the lessons.

Thanks to Sharon Hennessy for reporting on this lesson by Ismael Rosario.

Minigrants award winner '93:

"A Plan for My Future"

—a career awareness project by Bobbi Grant, Indian Valley Opportunity Committee, Adult ESL Program, Souderton, Pennsylvania.

What job and career futures are accessible to ESL students? How can they make their way into fulfilling, productive positions in the U S.? These were the crucial questions addressed by "A Plan for My Future," a project designed to help ESL students understand and identify educational, job, and career opportunities accessible to them. It was a way to begin to answer some of their questions about reaching for new levels of "success" and to discuss the responsibilities and benefits associated with this advancement.

"How can I get a bettter job? How can I improve my skills? How can I get an education? I have a family, I work third shift, I only have 9 years of school, I..." Many of our intermediate to advanced ESL students have the ability and desire to progress in their lives and only need some guidance and encouragement to help them succeed. So, this class was about: guidance, large doses of encouragement, information, resources, "the system," red tape, money, education, skills, goals, planning, and a way to get started. Our theme was "Learn from the past, honor the present, and plan for the future."

The project

The program was offered as part of an intensive adult ESL class. For two months, two hours every Friday the class learned about vocations, professions, education, and related social/cultural values in the U.S. The students ranged in age from 18 years to retirement and the majority came from Vietnam, Korea and India. Japan and Poland were also represented. Their educational backgrounds ranged from 6 years to college grad in their native countries, and work backgrounds included accountant, housewife, nurse, minister, nun, lab tech, skilled and unskilled labor.

Stories to relate to

We began with selected readings from *The Working Experience 3* by Jeanne H. Smith and Harry Ringel (New Readers Press, 1-800-448-8878). We read stories written by other ESL students about their experiences and how they worked hard to get ahead. Some talked about difficulties, some had happy endings, some were abut men and some women, all were real stories with hopes, and dreams, and feelings. The stories introduced vocabulary, job/career descriptions, and included comprehension and language skills exercises.

Career profiles

Our next step was to complete individual surveys that would help identify abilities and interests and give each student feedback about their potential job/career choices. The survey we used, *Career Decision-Making System Level 2* (published by American Guidance Service, Circle Pines, Minnesota), consisted of 120 questions about six major career categories.

The questions generated lengthy discussions about jobs, the education required for different positions, etc., and became the basis for each day's lesson. When the survey was finally completed, each student tallied up their scores to identify their career interest areas. This was an exciting moment and caused bright smiles. One student was amazed to discover that she could work in the legal or scientific fields.

Individual goals

With this information in hand, we began to develop a plan that would show how it could be possible to reach for these new goals. This was the most important step, to write "A Plan for My Future." Each student took all of their new ideas and the facts surrounding their lives and started to plot a new direction for the future.

It began with each student stating his or her goal. We then outlined the best approach to achieve it, alternatives, evaluation and conclusion. We discussed the obstacles, necessities, effort needed and all the things that might stand in the way. When we finished, each student had an outline that identified what they could do and how to begin their first step toward a brighter future.

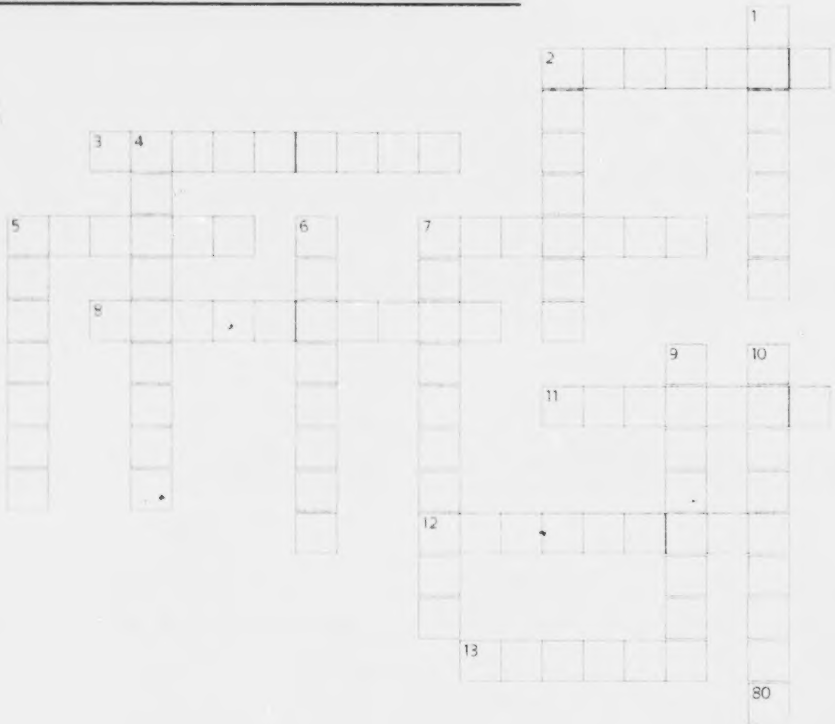
Not enough time

In conclusion, students and teacher felt the program was a success, but not long enough! We wanted to spend more time and explore even more alternatives and study some professions in more detail and take some field trips.

The majority of the class identified GED requirements as their next step. A couple of them will pursue technical certification, some want more ESL, and one was applying for college admission at a local school. The most unexpected plan was for our Buddhist nun to attend trade school and study auto mechanics...because it would save so much money for the convent on car repairs!

Crossword puzzle:

Career categories



Across clues

2. A carpenter has a ______ labor job.
3. An airplane pilot has a ______ career.
5. A custodian has a ______ labor job.
7. A veterinarian has a ______ career.
8. A bank president has a ______ career.
11. An electronics assembler has a ______ labor job.
12. A high school teacher works in the field of _____.
13. A dishwasher is a ______ labor worker.

Down clues

1. A waiter has a ______ profession.
2. A taxi driver does ______ work.
4. A Head Start teacher works in ______.
5. A dentist works in the ______ profession.
6. A bank teller is a ______ worker.
7. A store manager has a ______ career.
9. A receptionist has a ______ job.
10. A computer programmer has a ______ job.

Career categories:

Clerical
Education
Manual labor
Management
Medical
Service
Skilled labor
Technical

Hints & tips

Got an idea that works for you? Maybe you'd like to share it with other readers! ESL teachers and tutors are always looking for ideas to try out with their students.

The TV interview show

Margaret Beiter of Amherst, NY sent us this activity, and we thought it sounded like a lot of fun:

First, go over the concept of interview shows on television such as "Geraldo," "Oprah Winfrey," "Donohue," and any others your students may be familiar with. Ask students if such shows exist in their native countries.

Have students create a name for a class "TV interview show." Divide the students into pairs with a 'show host' (interviewer) and a 'guest' (interviewee) in each pair. Hand out index cards to the 'guests' with the names of familiar famous people from all over the world. For example: Elvis, John Lennon, President Clinton, etc. The celebrities can be living or dead.

The teacher can demonstrate the role-play with a student first. Decide who will be the celebrity and who the interviewer. Set two chairs facing each other in the front of the classroom. Introduce the celebrity, then ask him or her several questions geared to the students' level.

Now give the rest of the students some time to practice their interviews. Announce a time limit for each "show"—you'll probably want to keep them short so that everyone has a chance to go on—then let each pair give their interview for the class.

This activity is useful as a follow-up to lessons on simple questions, such as: How old are you? What country are you from? What are your hobbies? How is your job going? etc.

I've found that students love this game, and even the shyer students become animated and join in the general fun and laughter of the class. Hopefully the "Interview Show" will enrich your classes as it has mine!

— Margaret Beiter

Editor's note: *As Margaret mentioned, this would be a good way to practice questions, particularly for beginning students. For more advanced students, it also gives them a format to discuss social or political issues they are interested in, without personally putting themselves on the line, since it is a role-play. Advanced students might also like to discuss the "culture" of TV shows in general, or watch and discuss an interview show together. (For tips on using closed-captioned TV with your students, see the article about videos on page 6 of this issue.)*

Speak English, please!

Elaine Martyn teaches in the English Centre at the University of Hong Kong. Since all of her students speak the same first language (Cantonese), it is easy for them to resort to their own language rather than trying to say something in English. Here is her very clever solution!

When I have students working on projects or having discussions in English, I distribute one tape recorder per group—which usually means four recorders in the classroom at a time. I encourage students to use English, but say it's OK to switch to Cantonese if it's essential to clarify a particular point or word.

The recorder is like a magic monitor. The students want to practice speaking English, but perhaps due to shyness or social pressure they often revert to Cantonese when I am not present. But with a recorder, they use much more English, and after using it a few times don't feel so much pressure that it restricts their progress.

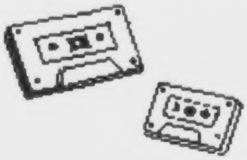
As an added benefit, I can listen to at least some of the tapes at another time, and give students comments on their progress, or simply write a note back communicating with them on the topic they have been discussing.

I have found this approach very useful and effective. A second benefit to me is that I am able to collect "authentic classroom discourse" for research purposes.

Try it and you may be amazed by the positive effects.

—Elayne Martyn

Internet address: emartyn@hkucc.hku.hk



Idea file

How to organize your idea file

We've suggested in past issues that you start an "idea file" to keep track of activities and nifty techniques that work with ESL students. If you put these ideas on 4x6 cards and keep them in a file box or small notebook, you can easily carry them with you.

Then, when you suddenly need a fill-in activity, or have to change your lesson plans at the last minute (this happens a lot in the world of adult ESL!) you can flip through your cards to find just the right one.

When you remove a card and carry it with you into the session, it instantly becomes your lesson prompter, reminding you step-by-step of your plan.

Treasure trove

We enjoy maintaining an idea file, because it makes us feel prepared for the unexpected. It's also useful as a browsing tool when preparing lessons because it helps to jog the memory about what's worked in the past. Best of all, though, is the feeling of satisfaction you get when adding good ideas to your collection—sort of like collecting baseball cards. And like a good baseball card collection, you can keep adding to it the rest of your life.

Sort by size

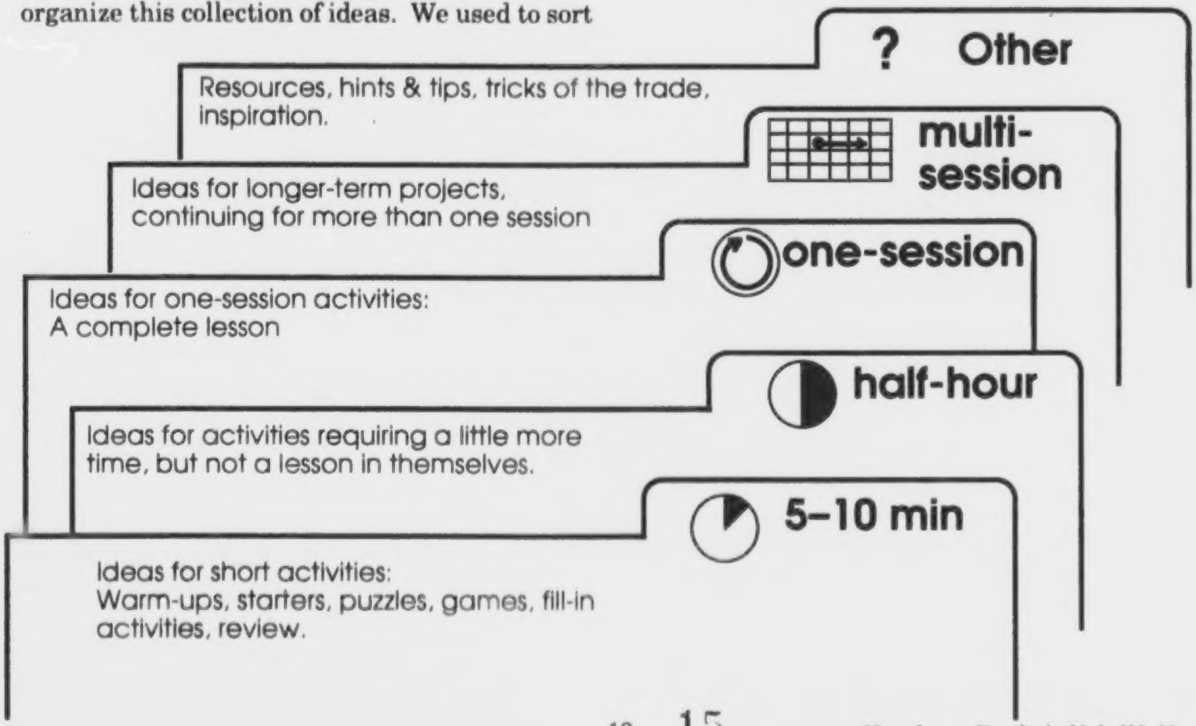
We have struggled in the past with how to organize this collection of ideas. We used to sort them by skill—for example reading activities, listening activities, etc.,—but this isn't really useful since most good activities cover a variety of skills. Recently, we had a brilliant thought (at least, it seemed brilliant to us)—why not sort them according to how much class time they take?

Usually when you're looking for an idea, you know how much class time you need it for. For example, you might be looking for a warm-up idea for the first 10 minutes of class. If you have all your short activities in one section, you can just browse through those until you find one that is appropriate, or one you can adapt for the occasion.

Try it

Here are five headings to organize your idea file by length of activity—the shortest activities (5-10 minutes), medium-length activities (a half hour), one-session activities (an hour or longer), and multi-session activities (which might stretch over a series of days or weeks). The last category, "Other," is for any other useful or inspirational idea that might help you in your planning, such as resources or hints & tips.

In case you'd like to try this yourself, we've prepared the headings for you to clip and tape to divider cards. (Note: this filing system will work fine for materials stored in a 3-ring binder also!)



? Other

Resources, hints & tips, tricks of the trade, inspiration.

multi-session

Ideas for longer-term projects, continuing for more than one session

one-session

Ideas for one-session activities:
A complete lesson

half-hour

Ideas for activities requiring a little more time, but not a lesson in themselves.

5–10 min

Ideas for short activities:
Warm-ups, starters, puzzles, games, fill-in activities, review.

News & notes

Upcoming conferences

✦ June 2-5, 1994—**Laubach Literacy Action Biennial Conference** on adult literacy, "The Challenge of Change," in Little Rock, Arkansas. Contact: Janet Hiemstra, LLA, (315) 422-9121.

✦ June 20-Aug 5, 1994—**TESOL Summer Institute** at Iowa State University. Thirty 3-credit graduate courses available. Contact: Dept of English, 316 Ross Hall, ISU, Ames, Iowa 50011. (515) 294-7819.

✦ June 21-25, 1994—**22nd Wyoming Conference on English**, "Multicultural Literacies," at the U. of Wyoming. Laramie, WY. Contact: Kathy Evertz, Dept. of English, U. of Wyoming, P.O. Box 2253, Laramie, WY 82071-3353. (307) 766-6486.

✦ July 7-9, 1994—**American Association of Educators in Private Practice (AAEPP)**. 1994 Ed Ventures Conference in Madison, Wisconsin. Contact: AAEPP, N7425 Switzke Rd., Watertown, WI 53094.

✦ July 13-17, 1994—**TESOL Summer Meeting** at the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls, Iowa. Contact: Harriet Schatzberg, SHC 132, Cedar Falls, Iowa 50614-0223. (319) 273-6988.

✦ July 20-Aug 5, 1994— Intercultural Communication Institute in Portland, Oregon. Contact: Intercultural Communication Institute, 8835 SW Canyon Lane, Ste 238, Portland, OR 97225. (503) 297-4622.

Group writing projects?

In an upcoming issue, *Hands-on English* is planning to bring you some ideas for group writing projects to use with your students. If you have tried an activity like this and would like to share your experience with us, please drop us a line! Thanks!

Conditions in Canada

Teaching conditions for adult educators have generally been better in Canada than in the U.S.—at least until now. We've heard that the federal government in Canada is introducing new funding restrictions for ESL programs. Teachers in those programs would no longer receive the health, disability and pension benefits they've had for the past 20 years.

Professional organizations there, including TESL Canada, are organizing to express their concerns.

Artur Godowski, an ESL professional in Canada, recently posted this message on the Internet: "Recent policies in funding...will relegate our profession to a volunteer, church-basement activity where exposure to language is an ersatz for teaching...Most of the individuals who will be affected by this policy are women."

If you're in Canada, we certainly hope you will get involved in expressing your views to the government. And, from our church basements here in the U.S., we wish you the best of luck!

Give a helping hand

Help a colleague get a good start next fall—give a gift subscription to *Hands-on English!* Just fill out the subscription form on page 2 with the recipient's name and mark it "gift." We'll send them a card explaining who the gift is from.

Makes a nice end-of-the-year token of appreciation for a colleague!

Health hazard?

WARNING—The Surgeon General has not yet determined whether teaching is hazardous to your health! While we're waiting for her to report on this issue, we hope you'll take some unofficial advice: Get some rest and relaxation during the summer! Or do something (whatever it is) that rejuvenates you.

If you're teaching through the summer, this goes double for you! Be sure to take some time for yourself as well. Don't let those fragile educator-circuits get overloaded—if they blow, we don't know where to get replacement parts.

Summer reading

Our consulting editor, Karen Campbell, recommends **In the Middle: Writing, reading and learning with adolescents** (1987, Boynton-Cook Publishers, Portsmouth, NH).

Karen says the book is "inspirational," and enjoyable to read. She finds many exciting possibilities in the book for improving instruction and for teaching multi-level classes. The ideas are easily adaptable to adult students.

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Combined, 3-year index of *Hands-on English* articles in Vols. I–III is available free of charge upon request. Back issues are available at US $4 per copy (this includes shipping costs).

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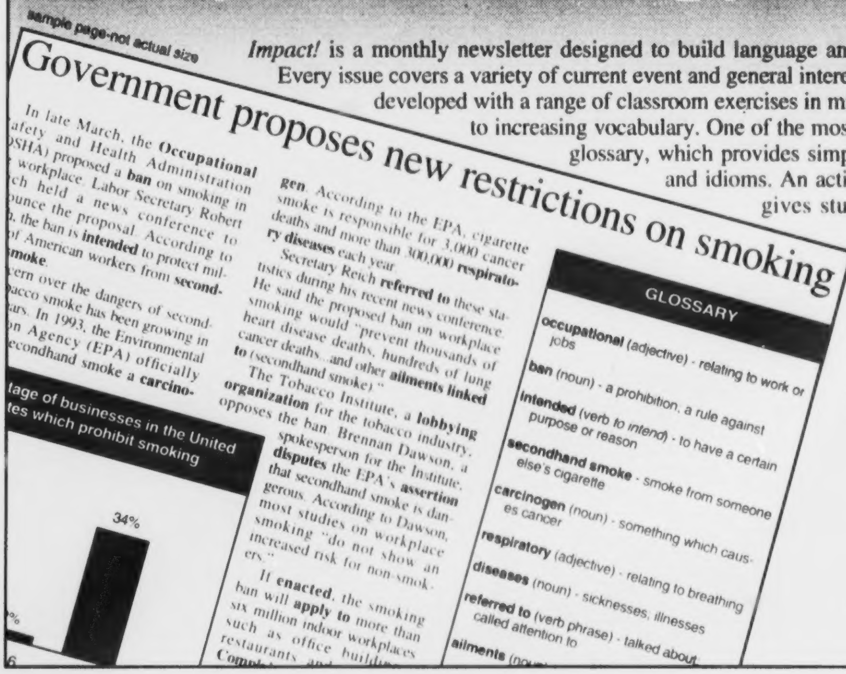

sample page-not actual size

Government proposes new restrictions on smoking

In late March, the **Occupational**
afety and Health Administration
SHA) proposed a **ban** on smoking in
workplace. Labor Secretary Robert
ch held a news conference to
unce the proposal. According to
, the ban is **intended** to protect mil-
f American workers from **second-**
moke.
ern over the dangers of second-
acco smoke has been growing in
ars. In 1993, the Environmental
n Agency (EPA) officially
econdhand smoke a **carcino-**
gen. According to the EPA, cigarette smoke is responsible for 3,000 cancer deaths and more than 300,000 **respiratory diseases** each year.

Secretary Reich **referred to** these statistics during his recent news conference. He said the proposed ban on workplace smoking would "prevent thousands of heart disease deaths, hundreds of lung cancer deaths...and other **ailments linked to** (secondhand smoke)."

The Tobacco Institute, a **lobbying organization** for the tobacco industry, opposes the ban. Brennan Dawson, a spokesperson for the Institute, **disputes** the EPA's **assertion** that secondhand smoke is dangerous. According to Dawson, most studies on workplace smoking "do not show an increased risk for non-smokers."

If **enacted**, the smoking ban will **apply to** more than six million indoor workplaces such as office buildings, restaurants and

tage of businesses in the United
tes which prohibit smoking

34%

GLOSSARY

occupational (adjective) - relating to work or jobs

ban (noun) - a prohibition, a rule against

intended (verb *to intend*) - to have a certain purpose or reason

secondhand smoke - smoke from someone else's cigarette

carcinogen (noun) - something which causes cancer

respiratory (adjective) - relating to breathing

diseases (noun) - sicknesses, illnesses

referred to (verb phrase) - talked about, called attention to

ailments

Impact! is a monthly newsletter designed to build language and reading skills in ESL students. Every issue covers a variety of current event and general interest topics. In addition, each issue is developed with a range of classroom exercises in mind, from identifying context clues to increasing vocabulary. One of the most unique features of *Impact!* is the glossary, which provides simple explanations of difficult words and idioms. An activity page at the end of each issue gives students practical reinforcement of the newly-acquired skills.

Impact! is used by students and teachers across the country and has been called "a valuable resource" for the ESL classroom.

To get your free issue of *Impact!*, send your name and address to:

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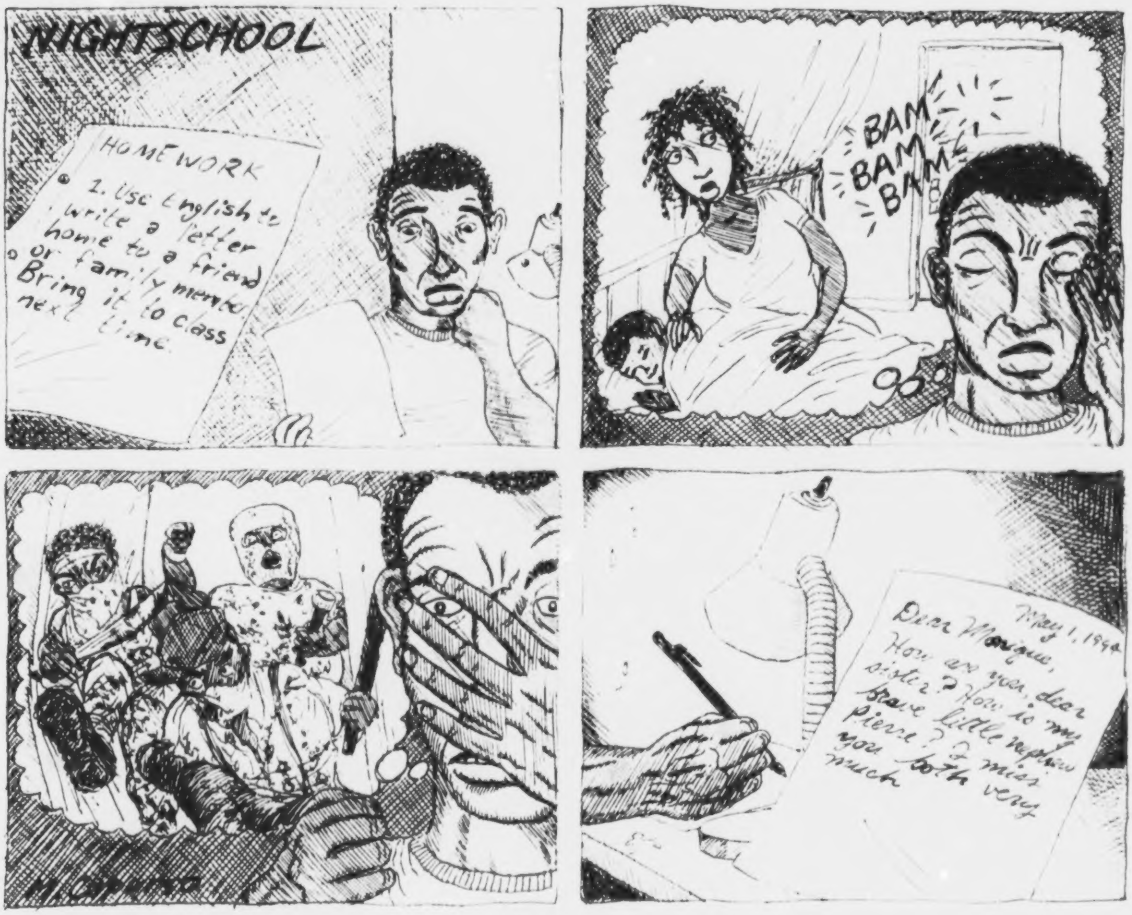
NIGHTSCHOOL
HOMEWORK
1. Use English to write a letter home to a friend or family member
Bring it to class next time.
BAM BAM BAM
May 1, 1994
Dear Monique,
How are you, dear sister? How is my brave little nephew Pierre? I miss you both very much

---

Hands-on
English
A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult ESL
P.O. Box 256
Crete, NE 68333
USA

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May/June issue

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Volume IV, Number 2 July/August 1994

Hands-on English

A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult English as a second language

Editorial:
A stellar career

We talked to a teacher this spring who was awfully discouraged about his status as an adult ESL teacher. "I feel like a second-class citizen," he said. Not only that, he said, because the pay was so much lower than what regular teachers were making he couldn't live on the salary. Starting this fall, he's going back to the high school classroom.

Well, that high school is gaining a dedicated teacher, and adult programs lose yet another professional who might have stayed if the conditions were better. We've seen this happen before, and you probably have, too. Another good friend who left teaching a few years ago to take a government job asked us: "Do you think this kind of teaching will ever become a real career?'

It's an interesting question, and the answer may be no. Sure, the anti-immigrant sentiment in the U.S. will swing back the other way eventually; more money will come along for education eventually; attitudes toward adult education will shift—but it's hard to imagine adult ESL ever getting the respect it deserves.

Nonetheless, we feel there is some reason for optimism in the next few years for a renewal of energy in our field. Here are some things to look forward to:

◆ A nationally televised adult ESL series, to be broadcast in 1995, published by McGraw-Hill and funded by the Annenberg Foundation. This will not only help students working at home but will, we hope, raise public consciousness about ESL.

◆ A shift in priorities on the part of TESOL, the professional organization for ESL teachers, toward a more active political advocacy role. More lobbying, and more work with other educational groups may give us some voice.

◆ A growing awareness in the business community that immigrant labor is a necessary and positive element in the workforce. That awareness may put pressure on schools to provide more ESL instruction for adults in the next few years.

◆ A more 'global' outlook in the U.S., which may benefit our students and us. NAFTA, for example, may eventually have a beneficial effect on the status of our Spanish-speaking students.

These may be thin hopes, and small comfort to a discouraged teacher. So, in the meantime we'll just have to make our careers vicariously—in the successes of our students.

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Hands-on English

Volume IV, Number 2
July/August 1994

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Permission to photocopy: This periodical is copyrighted. However, we invite teachers and tutors with a paid subscription (or whose institution has a paid subscription) to make as many copies as they need for their own classroom use. (Please don't make copies for colleagues! We survive on subscriptions.)

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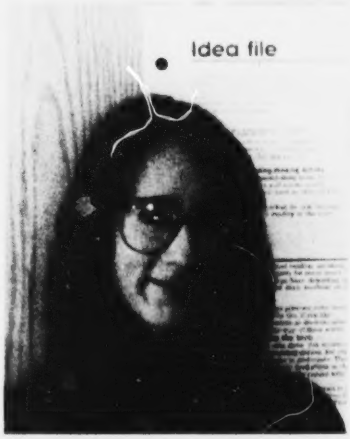
About the publication

Hands-on English is a small, independent publication that was started in 1991. The editor is a former ESL teacher who has taught ESL in many settings, including adult education programs, a refugee program, community college, and a university intensive English program. . .and survived to write about it.

Articles and ideas are contributed by experienced teachers and tutors, including our readers. If you have an article or teaching suggestion you would like to share, we welcome your input!

About the Minigrants program

Hands-on English awards a few small grants (of $100 each) annually for practical classroom projects. More information is available upon request.



Your editor, Anna Silliman, wishes you a very relaxing and refreshing rest of the summer!

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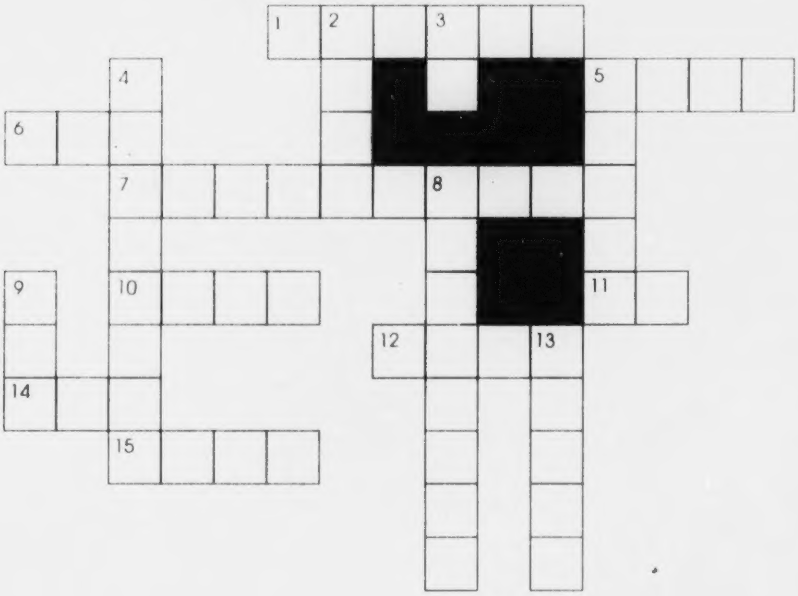
IV-2

Crossword puzzle:
Saying 'Thank you'



Word list:

appreciate
doing
easy
for
glad
grateful
great
have
inviting
kind
like
no
say
thanks
to
you

Across clues

1. Student A: "Here, you can use my pen."
   Student B: "____ a lot!"
5. Boss: "You did a good job today."
   Employee: "Thank you. I'm ____ you think so."
6. Student: "Thanks ___ lending me this book. I really enjoyed reading it."
   Student's friend: "You're welcome."
7. (In a letter) "Dear Mr. Smith, Thank you for sending me the information about your school. I ______ it very much."
10. Guest: This food is delicious!
    Host: Thank you. I'm glad you like it.
    Guest: Was it difficult to prepare?
    Host: No, it was ____.
11. Politician on TV: "I would like to say thank you ___ all my friends who helped me to win this election."
12. Woman: "Oh, no! I dropped all my books!"
    Man: "Here—I'll pick them up for you."
    Woman: "Thank you. That's very ___ of you."
14. Host: "Would you like another cookie?"
    Guest: "No, thank ___. But they really are delicious."
15. (In a letter) "Dear Susan, Thank you for the lovely tie you sent me for my birthday. I ___ it very much and I will wear it every day until I see you again. Love, Bill."

Down clues

2. Maria: "Happy birthday!"
   Lisa: "How did you know it was my birthday?"
   Maria: "Your sister told me last week. Here—this present is for you."
   Lisa: "Oh, how nice! You shouldn't ____ !"
3. Sudent 1: "Would you like a ride home?"
   Student 2: "___, thanks. I enjoy walking."
4. Parent: "Can you give me and my baby a ride to the doctor's tomorrow?"
   Friend: "Sure, no problem."
   Parent: "Thank you. I'm really ____ for your help."
5. (In a letter) "Dear Cousin Fred, Thank you for letting us stay with you when we visited California. We had a ____ time. I hope you'll come and visit us soon."
8. Friend 1: "Can you come to a party at our house on Saturday evening?"
   Friend 2: "I'd love to! Thanks for ______ me."
9. Father: "Here's your juice. What do you ___?"
   Small child: "Thank you."
13. Sister: "Thank you for ____ the dishes for me."
    Brother: "You're welcome. Next week you can do them for me."

Letters

Fan mail

A recent renewal order came with this note:

"Enclosed is my check and by the way, *Hands-on English* is the best thing to happen to ESL teachers the history of the profession. I really love it."

Cindy Haven, Pittsfield, MA

Stop it, you're making us blush!

ESL behind bars

"To Whom It May Concern:

I'm a new ESL tutor (volunteer) who finds your publication most helpful. Would appreciate any tips your readers may have on teaching ESL in prison, which is what I do.

Having a captive audience eager to learn English is the "greatest." However, the classes are multi-level and always changing. It's a real opportunity to test my skills at flexibility. All in all it's a wonderful experience and lots of fun."

Doña Dodson, Denver, CO

Editor's note: We're planning to bring you some comments on teaching in prisons in the September issue—anyone who has thoughts or ideas to contribute please contact the ***Hands-on*** *office!*

Poetry for ESL

"Dear Anna,

In response to Roumy Boukova's request for poetry adapted for ESL students, I recommend:

Words on the Page, the World in your Hands, Books 1,2,3 (Harper & Row Publishers, Dept. 361, 10 E. 53rd St., New York, NY 10022)

These are three small volumes of 'original fiction, poetry and memoirs by the finest contemporary writers...designed to be read by adults learning to read' but works with ESL students as well. There is also a complimentary teaching manual."

Sue Sager, ALC, Rogue Community College
Medford, OR

Holidays galore

In our last issue, we published a request from a reader for more holiday activities. Our trusty readers have responded by sending some of their favorites—so far we've received a Valentine's Day activity and a Mother's Day activity. We'll publish these for you in the appropriate season.

Meanwhile, both Bee Larson in Duluth, Minnesota and Fiona Armstrong in Brooklyn, New York contacted us with the same two references (great minds must think alike):

ESL Teacher's Holiday Activities by Elizabeth Claire, published by the Center for Applied Research in Education (CARE) 1990. This book is reported to be good for beginning ESL and ESL Literacy. It has lots of pictures and has reproducible pages.

American Holidays; Exploring Traditions, Customs and Backgrounds by Klebanow and Fischer (Pro Lingua Associates 1986). This book is at an intermediate level.

We're in Nebraska

One of our subscribers recently asked us on the phone "Are you *really* in Nebraska?" Well, the answer is yes—we're really in Nebraska! In case you're still unsure, it's the one that looks like this:

We're in a small town just south of the capital city of Lincoln.

As many of you know, we relocated here a year ago from upstate New York. Although the move was motivated by family reasons, now that we've settled in we're pleased to be just about equidistant from our customers on both coasts, and even closer to everybody else in between.

So, if you're passing over, give us a wave. If you're passing through, give us a call!

Idea file

Question-answer-question

Here's a great way to review questions, sent to us by Susan Gaer, Visalia Adult School in California. Susan likes to use this as a Monday activity.

The instructor dictates some questions which she has prepared ahead of time, such as: What did you do on Saturday? (The questions can be anything that is appropriate for the students at their level.) Five questions is a good number to work with.

The students write the *answer only* on a sheet of paper. For each question, have one student write the answers on the board, as an example for the other students.

Now guess the question

Have the students turn in their papers, and form into small groups of 3 or 4. Give each group one piece of paper and a pencil. Now the teacher reads one of the *answers* from a student's paper. In their groups, the students try to reconstruct the original question together. Check the result on the board.

Speaking practice

When all of the questions have been reconstructed, return the students' papers and have them ask and answer the questions orally in pairs. Then have all the classmates mingle and ask each other the questions from memory. (If this is too difficult, have each student memorize just *one* question to ask the other students.)

Why it works

This activity remains interesting, in spite of the repetition—it's a great way to reinforce questions without boredom. For more advanced students, try this activity with reading comprehension questions as well.

Because this requires almost no prep time, but provides your student with valuable practice in listening, writing, reading and speaking (not to mention thinking), it's an activity you'll definitely want to keep in your "idea file!"

Question-answer-question

Purpose: To reinforce questions; all-skills practice.
Level: Beginning through advanced
Time: 15 minutes, or longer depending on questions
Materials: None

1. Prepare 5 questions for your students.

Activity:

2. Read each of your questions to the class, while they write the answer only.
3. Have one student write his or her answers on the board.
4. Have students turn in their papers.
5. Divide students into small groups; give each group a piece of paper.
6. Read one answer from a student's paper; the students try to write the question. Check their results to see if they got the question right. (Repeat for each of the 5 original questions.)
7. Return the students' papers. In pairs, the students take turns asking the questions, using their own answers as a guide.
8. Now have all the students mingle and ask each other the 5 questions from memory.

40 helpful hints & tips
for making your ESL teaching easier and better!

For many ESL instructors, summer is a time of reflection about teaching, and of preparation for next fall. What can you do to improve your teaching? How can you make things go better? How can you work more efficiently to save yourself from wearing out? Where can you get new ideas to refresh yourself and your students?

To help you in gearing up for a new start, we decided to poll some colleagues for their best suggestions and teaching hints! With the help of e-mail and the TESL-L network we were able to gather a lot of tips. Here's what we've come up with so far:

1
Join a professional organization

Teaching can be a lonely occupation. Connect yourself to a network of people who do what you do and who share your concerns. You'll usually receive newsletters and reduced fees at conferences as a benefit. But consider joining also as a way of lending strength to an organization that can speak up on behalf of immigrants' rights and educators' concerns!

TESOL is the international organization for ESL/EFL teachers with over 20,000 members. (Call 703-836-0774 for information.) There are dozens of smaller, regional TESOL affiliates that you can join as well—your state probably has its own affiliate. And there are other organizations that might relate to the kind of work you do, so keep looking until you get connected!

2
Attend workshops and conferences

Even if you haven't joined an organization, you can still go to conferences, and there's no better way to meet fellow teachers, get some inspiring ideas and see ESL books and materials on exhibit. (Note: if you only want to see the book exhibit, some larger conferences will sell you an exhibit pass for a reduced fee.)

If you can't make it to a conference, try at least to attend some teachers' workshops. Most school districts and community colleges offer training sessions or workshops you can attend. But don't limit yourself just to ESL! You can get good teaching ideas from other areas as well.

3
Start your own support group

Find some fellow instructors who are willing to meet occasionally or have lunch together for the purpose of exchanging thoughts and ideas. A long-term relationship with other teachers can be very beneficial! The members of your group don't have to be from the same school—in fact it sometimes works better if they are not.

". . .get connected!"

4
Get online

If you have access to the Internet through work or through a commercial e-mail service, sign up for some discussion groups. The one we know about is called TESL-L, which provides an opportunity to talk with thousands of ESL professionals internationally. To sign up, send an e-mail message to Anthea Tillyer: ABTHC@CUNYVM.CUNY.EDU You'll receive information on what to do next.

A note of caution: This form of communication is addictive and can take up a lot of your time! You may want to get started during a school break.

5
Get a pile of catalogs

Finding just the right ESL materials for your students can sometimes be a challenge! Get yourself on the mailing list with lots of different publishers so you'll receive their ESL catalogs. You'll find it useful to have a library of catalogs to browse through when you need to.

Start with Addison-Wesley, Heinle & Heinle, Oxford University Press and Regents-Prentice Hall, but also seek out the smaller companies too, as they often have great materials. And don't overlook literacy organizations as a source for materials—New Readers Press (Laubach) and Literacy Volunteers of America (LVA) both have extensive catalogs.

6
Get book distributors' catalogs

To get your hands on ESL materials quickly, sometimes it's best to call a book distributor such as DELTA in Illinois (1-800-323-8270), ALTA in California (1-800-ALTA/ESL) or BOOKLINK in New Jersey (201-947-3471). They carry books from many different publishers (although not all) and can usually ship you your order in a couple of days.

7
Get examination copies

Many publishers offer "examination copies" of certain titles to teachers who might be adopting a text for their classes.

You usually must submit your request for these on school letterhead; see individual publishers' catalogs for details.

8

Make friends with a librarian

Start a steady relationship with a librarian, either at your institution or at a public library. These people are amazing in terms of what they can find out for you and the services they can provide for your students!

Tell them the kinds of things you are interested in or that you are looking for, and then stop in once a week (with cookies) to pick their brains. You won't regret it.

9

Make friends with the secretarial staff

If you are lucky enough to have secretarial help where you work, they are likely to be overworked and very unappreciated. However, they can provide vital help and information to your and your students, so treat them well and bring cookies.

10

Make friends with a custodian

The other truly powerful person at your school, who can really help you when you need it, is the custodian. Sue Sandeen recommends you get to know the custodial staff before Day One, and again, remember them with cookies.

11

Get a business card

Why is it that so few teachers have business cards? Give yourself a self-esteem boost and order some. They are usually around $25 for a box of 500. This will make it easier for you to network when you go to conferences and meetings.

If you don't have a fancy title, you still deserve a business card! One card we saw said simply: "Bill Smith, Teacher" with the home address and phone number below. Another one we've seen said: "Susan Jones, English as a Second Language Instructor." Volunteer tutors can often get business cards with the logo of their organization printed on them. This is a great way to introduce yourself as well as to spread the word about your agency.

> *"Make friends with a librarian"*

12

Enroll in a foreign language class

Put yourself in the position of a student and learn what it feels like to struggle with a new language. This experience will improve your teaching in both large and small ways. And by the way, this exercise is worth repeating every few years—even if you already speak a foreign language, you've probably forgotten what it felt like when you started.

13

Keep a private teaching journal

This might sound like extra work, but if you keep a record of what works with your students and what doesn't, you'll find it invaluable in future years when looking for ideas.

We recently looked through some old lesson-plan books and found comments we'd written like "Great lesson!" and "Terrible day" to be extremely unhelpful. Take the extra time to write down what exactly you did and what the students' response was. (This exercise will help you prepare for the next day's lesson at the same time, by reflecting on what has happened so far.)

14

Organize lessons by topic

Adult programs can be especially chaotic. One very effective way to organize what the students are learning is by topics, which the students themselves can determine. Within one topic (whether it's grocery shopping or world peace) there is plenty of room for adjusting to different students' levels and for offering help in all the skill areas the students might need (such as reading, pronunciation, spelling, fluency, etc.) This will be more cohesive from the students' point of view than a series of unrelated language activities.

15

Adopt a textbook series

If your program needs even more structure, Shirley Ostler recommends your program adopt a graded series of ESL texts. The benefit of this is that everybody can clearly see progress, and when students miss a class they can see what they've missed in the book. Many students understandably prefer to have the security of a textbook they can take home and look at or study from. Lesson planning is a little easier when such a text is in place, and yet there is still room for supplementing the material with other creative activities.

16

Always give clear guidelines

When teaching a course, Fiona Savage says one should always give clear guidelines to students at the beginning. These should include not only what coursework is expected from students, but also the teacher's expectations as to attendance, punctuality, homework, etc. This will help prevent misunderstandings and problems later.

17

Always have a lesson plan

There is nothing worse than being unprepared, says Michele Bowman. Some people may be able to do lessons "off the cuff" after years of teaching—however, even these people probably have some kind of lesson plan jotted down somewhere.

18

Always have a backup plan

You never know what's going to go wrong and when, especially in adult programs! Fiona Savage suggests always having a spare exercise or language game up your sleeve. She also suggests preparing more materials than you strictly need for a lesson, as it is sometimes unpredictable how fast a class will work from day to day.

Rick Rosenberg keeps a short-duration activity file on hand at all times, for this reason. His file includes two lists of riddles and answers (students memorize one part and move around the room to find the person with the matching riddle or answer). He also keeps a password-like game,called "Just-a-Minute" (by Elizabeth Claire) handy, with his own adaptation of it with voabulary the class is working on, and a packet of short interesting articles about topics of interest to students.

He keeps this file on hand to reinforce the language or activities of the class, or as something to fall back on if he sees the students want a break or a change of pace.

19

Use real language

Have students study the language that is going on around them. Janice Higdon has her students take Walkman-type tape recorders with them to the workplace, stores, restaurants, etc. and bring language samples in to class to study. She also has them bring in written items or forms which they must work with in their jobs or with government agencies.

Using the language the students find, she develops situations for role-playing about restaurants, stores, banks or other business and social situations.

20

Invest in 3x5 cards

There are millions of language activities you can do with plain 3x5 cards. Emily Thrush says she could happily teach English with nothing more than these cards and some markers or pens!

Some of their uses include: flash cards, concentration games, matching games, word order practice, pair work, information-gap activities, and on and on and on. (Pro Lingua Associates has two books with detailed descriptions of card activities—*Index Card Games*, and *More Index Card Games*.)

21

Save time by photocopying less

We need to think about saving time and resources in preparing for classes. Abbie Tom points out that one way to do this is to avoid photocopying as much as possible. Instead of copying ten exercises, copy one and think of ten activities you can do with it! Also use dictations in class and newsprint sheets as alternatives to copying.

22

Milk every activity to its fullest

This suggestion is both a time-saver and good pedagogy. Barbara Gottschalk has seen many teachers rush from worksheet to worksheet and textbook to textbook, wearing out themselves and the copy machine in the process! It's sounder teaching practice to fully expand on each item you present.

Here is a checklist of questions which Barbara suggests we ask, for example about a story the students have read: Have they talked about it? Have they talked to each other about it? Have they written about it? Have they written about what someone else said about it? Have they read what other students have written about it? Have they done a dictation about it for listening practice? The repetition such activities provide is very important for language learning.

23

Explain the purpose of activities

Adults work better when they know why they are being asked to do something in a certain way. Fiona Savage points out that it's important to include students in your reasons for doing things—not necessarily for everything but at least from

> *"copy less— invent more activities"*

time to time. Particularly if students are resistant to the way you are doing something, it is helpful to explain the learning principles behind the method.

24

Reduce teacher talk

Pay attention to the percentage of class time devoted to your speech. Only at the very lowest language levels should you be talking more than your students.

25

Create a community

'Turning the classroom into a community of learners' is a phrase we've heard before but may not know how to realize. Joy Kreeft Peyton, National Clearinghouse on Literacy Education (NCLE), says that in a classroom community, everyone has responsibility for seeing that learning happens. This may hard to achieve at first, but a very helpful book with some guidelines is: The Different Drum : Community Making and Peace by M. Scott Peck(1987 Simon & Shuster).

26

End with success

End every class with a sense of accomplishment, says Sue Sandeen. It's also nice to end with a laugh, or with a game. If possible, say goodbye to each student by name.

27

Have students write you a letter

To find out if students are learning, not getting lost and whether they understand what is going on, institute a regular feedback writing, suggests Susan Simon. Ask the students to write you a letter about what they've learned, what they are confused about, and what they still want to know. Students love getting a personal response, and it is well worth the time.

28

Write dialogue journals with your students

An expanded version of the above suggestion is an actual journal which each student keeps and which you respond to regularly in writing. Using dialogue journals to write back and forth with your students can keep you in touch with what they are really thinking underneath all that classroom talk. (For examples of this technique, see *Writing Our Lives: Reflections on Dialogue Journal Writing with Adults Learning English* , Joy Kreeft Peyton & Jana Staton, Eds., 1991 Prentice Hall Regents.)

"sing,
sing,
sing!"

29

Teacher movement

When you present something to students, be aware of your movement, which can convey a lot of meaning. Movement includes your posture, gestures, expressions and appearance, as well as visual aids both planned and unplanned. Karen Campbell reports that research has shown that 60% of the impact of a presentation is due to movement, 30% due to voice and only 10% due to words.

30

Use "right brain" activities, too

Try to incorporate rhythm, music, drawing, imagination and visualization into your lessons.

For example, Karen Campbell uses an incomplete picture (two wavy lines) which her students have to expand into a picture of something, then write about. Lloyd Rogers likes to invent simple jazz chants suitable for his students or a special occasion. And Shirley Ostler urges us to "sing, sing, sing." Students love it, and it reinforces English intonation patterns and sounds, much as the jazz chants do.

31

Stories with holes

To encourage imaginative thinking, Michael Babayco reads incomplete stories to his students, or little-known fairy tales without the ending. Students have to try to figure out the rest of the story by asking probing questions. Sometimes the activity is done with only "yes" or "no" questions.

32

BINGO games

Lots of teachers have used Bingo games to reinforce language. With her beginning students, Helen V. Jones uses a variation that has AEIOU for the letters. The students got practice in distinguishing the vowel sounds and the numbers (such as sixteen and sixty) in an enjoyable game.

33

Unscramble the letters

As an end-of-class activity, Richard Taylor has a word game that is better than Hangman. He writes a scrambled word on the board (for example, the word 'secretary'). The students try to see how many one-letter words, two-letter words, three-letter words, etc. they can find. They can do this in groups or as a whole class. Can anyone (besides the instructor) use all the letters to make one word? This is a good vocabulary builder and can last from 5 to 45 minutes.

34
Question cards

Another filler activity comes from Michael Babyco, who keeps a recipe card box filled with 3x5 cards handy. On these cards he has written a variety of questions that are appropriate to challenge the students' thinking or knowledge. Whenever he has a few minutes, he picks a card and reads it to see who can answer first. As cards get recycled, students get reinforcement.

35
Back-to-back

To encourage use of descriptive words, Michael has 2 students sit back-to-back. One is given a picture of abstract shapes, the other a blank page and a pencil. The first student must describe the shapes, their sizes and their location on the page so the other student can make a drawing that will match as closely as possible to the original. (Tip: For some prepared drawings for this activity, see *Talk-A-Tivities* by Richard Yorkey (Addison-Wesley).

36
Jokes

Humor is one of the hardest things to share with ESL students, but they love to learn about it. Richard Taylor says he's had good luck with jokes from 8-year olds! For example, "There were thirty sick sheep and ten escaped—how many were left?"

If you can find some 8-year olds to supply you with more jokes, you'll have lots of good teaching material!

37
Guessing game

To review vocabulary, play a "yes"/"no" game, a variation on Twenty Questions. The teacher (or a student) thinks of a word. Other students ask, "Is it _____?" to which the answer can be only "yes" or "no." Sharon Hennessy says this provides lots of fun pattern practice.

38
Vocabulary expansion

When presenting a new word, give not only its immediate meaning but expand on its uses as well. Jim Duber suggests when presenting a verb, always to indicate the prepositions it can take and the different meanings this results in. When presenting a noun, always include an article (a or an) and the term used for counting multiples of the noun, for example: a letter, lots of letters=mail.

Also give real-life examples of how we use this vocabulary.

"grammar on a stick"

39
"S" on a stick

Most ESL students have trouble at one stage of their learning remembering to use the 3rd person singular "s" at the end of verbs. Esther Robbins has a clever way to get the students to self-correct this error—she has a large cardboard "S" mounted on a popsicle stick, which she keeps in her briefcase. If the error occurs, she silently holds up the "S" as a reminder. Sometimes she will as a student to pass the "S" to the one who needs it.

40
Oral history questionaires

For discussion topics in class, Judith Snoke reports that she's had very good luck with the "Southern Oral History Questionaire" from the Department of History, UNC/Chapel Hill.

Some of the amazingly effective questions, she says, include: describe the house you grew up in or the home of someone you loved; describe a meal at your childhood home—who is at the table, what do you eat, who serves, who eats first, who shops, who cooks and who cleans up; where do family members sleep, who do they sleep with; what is the naughtiest thing you can remember doing; who supported the family, what kinds of jobs did family members have?

Most libraries have some information on oral history—ask your librarian to help you find similar materials.

Bonus tip— 41
A reading journal

Encourage students to read by having them keep a journal of what they're reading and what they think about it, suggests Nicole Keshave. This can work for students at many different levels.

Do you have hints & tips you'd like to share with our readers? If so, Hands-on English woants to hear from you! Send us your description of something that's worked for you and we'll include it in a future issue.

Hands-on English

Reader survey

We'd really like to know what you think about *Hands-on English*, and what we can do for you in the next few issues that would be of greatest benefit!

If you can take a moment to give us some feedback, please fill this out, tear of and mail it to us. (Your name is not necessary unless you would like a response.)

Thank you very much!

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Address change (if any):

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Use this space to include a teaching suggestion you'd like to share with our readers:

Reader survey

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⊛ Minigrants award winner '93:

Families reading together

Karen Holmes, MOC Head Start Program, Fitchburg, MA.

The project participants were Head Start parents attending an ESL/GED class. As part of the course, parents were encouraged to select children's books from the program's resource library to read to their children.

In the adult class, the students learned step-by-step procedures for reading to children. (The source for these instructions was the *Reading with Children* manual published by Literacy Volunteers of America, LVA.) Then they could go into their child's classroom, which was located in the same building, and read a story to their child or to a group of children.

Many parents who were intimidated by "adult" books were comfortable with the simpler text of a children's book. They were improving their own skills while spending 'quality time' with their children. It was hoped that this exercise would increase parent's confidence in reading with their children, as well as increase their self-esteem.

During the project, parents read "classic" children's books for the first time in their lives. They gained a comfort level with books and with reading to children that they had not had before. The hope is that this introduction to the joys and pleasures of reading would provide a long-term benefit to both parents and children.

At the end of the program year, all of the parents were invited to a literacy luncheon, and were given a packet of materials, including 8 children's books of their own to read together with their children.

Some of the children's books the parents read included:

I Love My Family
Just a Thunderstorm
Over in the Meado
Swimmy Book
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear
Temper Tantrum Book
Tom Book
26 Letters & 99 Cents
Two Tiny Mice
Count

On the market

Reviews of useful ESL materials

A listening text

Now Hear This! High Beginning Listening, Speaking & Pronunciation, 2nd Edition, by Barbara H. Foley (1994 Heinle & Heinle, 800-237-0053) ISBN 0-8384-5270-1. Book $12.50 (Set of 4 cassettes $50.)

A few years ago the first edition of this book was one of our favorite ESL listening texts. We've just seen the new edition, hot off the press, and it looks even better than the old one.

There are 15 units, each of them on a different topic which can be used independently from the rest of the book—a feature you'll appreciate if you're looking for materials to use on an occasional basis. The narratives include a story about two toll collectors and how they like their jobs, a teenager who is worried about her mother's smoking habits, a man stopped for drunk driving, the bombing of the World Trade Center, and more.

There is a special nugget of emotion in each story that makes it real, and makes the students want to stretch to understand it. The stories are a nice blend of human interest and instructional content, and the materials manage to avoid any tinge of the patronizing tone that taints so many adult materials on the market.

The listening exercises are uncomplicated and help the students to focus on distinguishing meaning. In the new edition there are also interview, pair work and discussion activities that look really interesting, fun and appropriate. One unit would provide plenty of material for a full class session, with some follow-up activities outside of class.

The material is not necessarily designed for a multi-level class. If you do have some advanced students in the class, they will find the stories interesting as well, but you'll have to think of some more challenging follow-up activities for them. For tutors this book would be great; however to take full advantage of the activities it would work best with two or more students working together.

For beginning level students (even pre-literate), Barbara Foley has a similar listening text, Listen to Me! which is also very useful.

On the market

Reviews of useful ESL materials

Also worth mentioning. . .

Dictionary skills

Longman Dictionary of American English ***Workbook***, by Marjorie Fuchs (Addison-Wesley/Longman, 800-322-1377) ISBN 0-8013-0840-2. Book $8.50, 76pp.

We've said before that we really like the Longman Dictionary of American English for intermediate-level ESL students. We like to encourage students to use a monolingual dictionary as soon as possible, and this one is easy for them to understand.

Now there's a very useful workbook (by Marjorie Fuchs, an ESL author we have a lot of respect for) that can help your students learn to use the dictionary more effectively. Slogging through dictionary exercises may not be their idea of fun, but we think they should do it anyway.

Another vocab text

New Ways in Teaching Vocabulary, Paul Nation, Editor (1994 TESOL, 703-836-0774) ISBN 0-939791-51-X. Book $22.95, 218pp.

In our last issue we reviewed a vocabulary text for advanced students; here are some teaching ideas that will work at many different levels. A collection of practical teaching ideas from teachers across the country, this resource contains activities ranging from vocabulary BINGO to story retelling.

Home-made jazz chants

Singing, Chanting, Telling Tales: Arts in the Language Classroom by Carolyn Graham (1992 Prentice-Hall, Inc.) ISBN 0-13-808056-9. Book 75pp.

This little book might give you some inspiration on trying out chants with your students, or creating your own chants and songs. (Does this sound childish to you? If you do it with conviction, it's not childish at all.)

Advanced level dictionary

Longman Language Activator, The World's First Production Dictionary (1993 Longman Group UK, order from Addison-Wesley 800-322-1377). ISBN 0-582-04093-0. Book $29.95, 1600 pp.

If you have advanced level students—college-bound, say, or professionally oriented—they will want this dictionary. You use it to look up an idea you're trying to express, and it shows you the different ways of saying it, with zillions of real-life examples. It makes interesting reading even for a native speaker.

Reading text

Reading Workout by Jann Huizenga and Maria Thomas-Ruzic (1994 Heinle & Heinle, 800-237-0053) ISBN 0-8384-3980-2. Book $15, 166pp.

This book has a reasonably interesting collection of 30 human interest, news story-like readings (ie, Why women live longer than men; Grandma, 53, Delivers Twins; Conquering Jet Lag) at a level that high beginners/low intermediate students can read. Each selection has a couple of short written exercises that help the students to focus on the main ideas. A few vocabulary exercises help review new words.

One feature of this book that is very nice is that there are several reading selections written by ESL students/immigrants. These provide culture contrast to the main readings , and could also be used as examples for student writing assignments or discussions.

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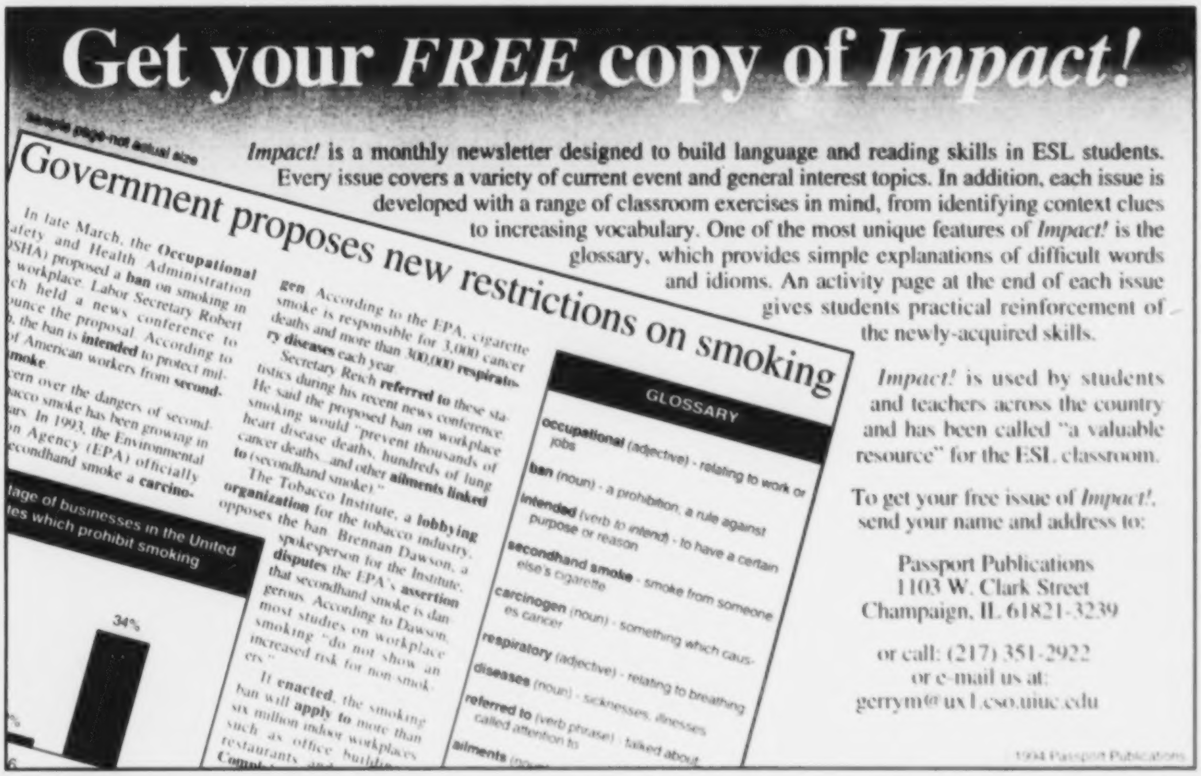

Get your *FREE* copy of *Impact!*

Sample page-not actual size

Government proposes new restrictions on smoking

In late March, the **Occupational**
afety and Health Administration
OSHA) proposed a **ban** on smoking in
workplace. Labor Secretary Robert
ch held a news conference to
unce the proposal. According to
, the ban is **intended** to protect mil-
of American workers from **second-**
moke.
ern over the dangers of second-
acco smoke has been growing in
ars. In 1993, the Environmental
n Agency (EPA) officially
econdhand smoke a **carcino-**

gen. According to the EPA, cigarette smoke is responsible for 3,000 cancer deaths and more than 300,000 **respiratory diseases** each year.

Secretary Reich **referred to** these statistics during his recent news conference. He said the proposed ban on workplace smoking would "prevent thousands of heart disease deaths, hundreds of lung cancer deaths...and other **ailments linked to** (secondhand smoke)."

The Tobacco Institute, a **lobbying organization** for the tobacco industry, opposes the ban. Brennan Dawson, a spokesperson for the Institute, **disputes** the EPA's **assertion** that secondhand smoke is dangerous. According to Dawson, most studies on workplace smoking "do not show an increased risk for non-smokers."

It **enacted**, the smoking ban will **apply to** more than six million indoor workplaces such as office buildin
restaurants and
Compl

tage of businesses in the United
tes which prohibit smoking

34%

%

6

GLOSSARY

occupational (adjective) - relating to work or jobs

ban (noun) - a prohibition, a rule against

intended (verb *to intend*) - to have a certain purpose or reason

secondhand smoke - smoke from someone else's cigarette

carcinogen (noun) - something which causes cancer

respiratory (adjective) - relating to breathing

diseases (noun) - sicknesses, illnesses

referred to (verb phrase) - talked about, called attention to

ailments (nou

***Impact!* is a monthly newsletter designed to build language and reading skills in ESL students.** Every issue covers a variety of current event and general interest topics. In addition, each issue is developed with a range of classroom exercises in mind, from identifying context clues to increasing vocabulary. One of the most unique features of *Impact!* is the glossary, which provides simple explanations of difficult words and idioms. An activity page at the end of each issue gives students practical reinforcement of the newly-acquired skills.

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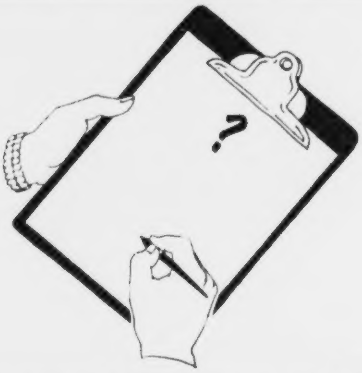
Tools & techniques:
“One question interview,” revisited



One question interview, revisited

In a previous issue (Vol. II, No. 1, p. 6) we published a communication activity by Fiona Armstrong in which the students take a class survey, with each student responsible for a single question.

We've heard from readers that the activity is very successful, and that more sets of questions would be useful, so here they are. (Of course, the questions can also be used for many other activities, such as small group discussion or writing!)

Grocery questions

1. Where do you buy your groceries? Why?
2. In your opinion, which grocery store here is the best one? Why?
3. Who does your grocery shopping?
4. When you go shopping, do you go alone or with someone?
5. How many people do you shop for?
6. How many times do you shop for food in a week?
7. Do you use coupons?
8. What 3 things do you always buy at the grocery store?
9. What kind of spices do you buy?
10. Do you buy frozen food? What kind?
11. Have you ever bought food that was bad? What did you do?
12. Name one thing you don't understand about American grocery stores.
13. Where did you get your groceries in your country?
14. Have you ever had a vegetable garden?
15. Is there some food you like that you can't buy here? What is it ? (Or: what kind of food is it?)

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Hands-on English

A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult English as a second language

Editorial:

From the global to the local

Many times the terrible tragedies of the world seem impossible to grasp intellectually, let alone to resolve. It's when you actually know one of the victims (or innocent bystanders) involved as a friend that pat solutions or policy arguments have to wash away—the greatest concern you feel is for that person's well-being and their family's secure future.

Over the years, we've known and liked students from many countries whose politics we would no doubt disagree with. One of our memorable Polish students would have liked to see Reagan bombing the Soviets as a preventative measure, for example. An unhappy young man from Haiti was the son of a member of Duvalier's government. And we would not have wanted to discuss the pros and cons of American involvement in Southeast Asia with many of our Vietnamese students whose families suffered as a direct result of the U.S. pullout. In the face of personal survival, politics can just seem irrelevant.

One of our favorite examples of how political differences can disappear in the classroom was in the summer of 1982 or 83 while the Iran-Iraq war was still raging. Two young men in our ESL class, one from Iran and one from Iraq, were initially afraid of each other. One was so terrified, in fact, he almost dropped the class to avoid the other. With a little coaxing, they got to know each other and within three days were fast friends.

People we know

For ESL instructors, the issues of the fallout from Chernobyl, the U.S. Castro policy, ethnic and political hatred in the former Yugoslavia and in Rwanda, or the terror in Haiti are not just abstract news but events in the lives of real people whom we know as friends.

This doesn't necessarily give us any better information for understanding the global issues, or a clearer perspective on them—sometimes a little inside information actually makes things look even *more* complicated. But knowing a real person involved does make the issues on the daily news seem vividly human.

As ESL instructors, we're fortunate to be in a position to help survivors of these conflicts to learn English and connect with our culture. Although we may not be able to do much to help on a larger scale, the glimmer of hope we see in one student's eye is enough to lift the heart.

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Hands-on English

Volume IV, Number 3
September/October 1994

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About the publication

Hands-on English is a small, independent publication that was started in 1991. The editor is a former ESL teacher who has taught ESL in many settings, including adult education programs, a refugee program, community college, and a university intensive English program. . .and survived to write about it.

Articles and ideas are contributed by experienced teachers and tutors, including our readers. If you have an article or teaching suggestion you would like to share, we welcome your input!

About the Minigrants program

Hands-on English awards a few small grants (of $100 each) annually for practical classroom projects. Applications are due April 30, and are available upon request.

Which of the following is this editor saying?

1) "What do you mean, you didn't want it cut up??"
2) "We can't afford a paper shredder, so I have to do it by hand."
3) "Your students will love this—each sentence has 400 pieces."

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Letters

Reader survey results

In our last issue, we published a survey to find out what our readers think of *Hands-on English*. So far, we've received 37 responses (about 3% of our readers—not too bad!) and we thought you'd be interested to hear what kinds of comments we got.

Whew!

On the questions about our customer service, every respondent said they had received all their issues, and that our service was fine. We breathed a sigh of relief when we saw that, although perhaps those people with complaints are among those who didn't respond—we're not sure. (Occasionally a subscriber does call us about a missing issue, which we replace right away.) One reader wrote: "You're doing great so far," so we are encouraged.

Level O.K.

Most of those responding indicated that the level of our activities is appropriate for, or adjustable to, their students. However, two people said the level is too low and one said the level is too high, which tells us we need to continue aiming for a wide range of levels in our activities.

About eight people mentioned that multi-level activities are helpful, and we know many of you are teaching in multi-level situations and so will continue to bring you these as we can.

Most helpful features

Most readers listed as the most helpful features of *Hands-on* all of those which are copyable, practical, and directly applicable to their teaching (including the Puzzles, Idea file, Grammar grab-bag, Hints & tips, Tips for tutors, and Tools & techniques). Rest assured that this will continue to make up the bulk of our publication!

Response was mixed on the Book reviews, Letters, and Editorials, with some people finding them useful and others not.

Listed as *least* useful were the Minigrants reports, ads, and cartoon, although we got the sense that many readers do enjoy reading them. One reader found the cartoon too depressing; another says she enjoys discussing it with her class.

Future topics

Perhaps the most useful part of this survey was the section on articles that readers would like to see in future issues. The list includes:

What works for other teachers; idea exchange
Descriptions of ESL programs
Reports about actual students; case study
Issues in adult education
Individual tutoring (one-on-one)
English as a Foreign Language (EFL)
English for Specific Purposes (ESP)
Workplace ESL, scientific & technical
Pre-literacy ESL activities
More visuals
Multi-level activities
Cultural activities
Multi-cultural harmony; customs
Game activities
Grammar handouts and how-to-explain
How to integrate speaking and writing
Current events topics
Current events in simple English
Classroom issues: short attention span, discipline, etc.
More reviews of teaching materials
Whole language sample lessons
Literature for adult ESL

We would be delighted to hear from any readers who have activities or ideas to share on the above topics. Finally, a large number of people responded that they want to see *more* of the same kinds of activities we've been bringing you already!

More, more, more!

When asked 'what would you change?' about *Hands-on English*, eleven respondents said "nothing!" and many others left that question blank. At least nine people answered they'd like to see the publication coming out more often, or monthly. (We'd love it, too, but at our current level of operations it wouldn't be possible. We'll hang on to the dream, though!) One person said she'd like a longer issue, but we're likely to keep to a shorter length—manageability is an important feature to our busy readers, we believe.

Comments

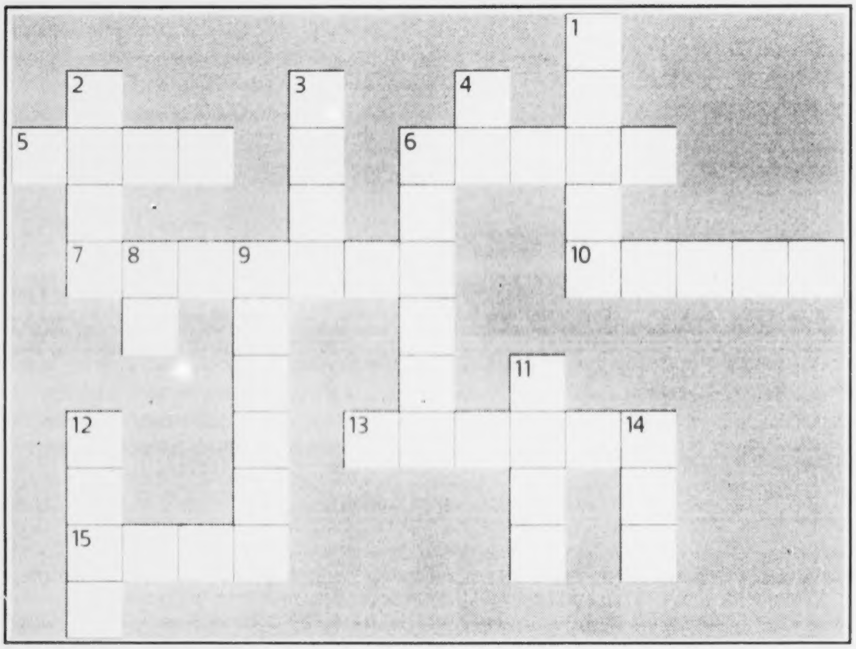
We don't have space to include all the nice comments people sent us, like "Great," "Wonderful," and "Keep up the good work!" but one stands out: "As a very new teacher, I turn to *Hands-on English* constantly as it is a practical (vs. theoretical) help. I have the sense that it is a very caring publication and there is always something in each issue. Thank you so much!"

And thank *you* for your responses. We are always interested in your input.

Multi-level crossword puzzle:

Time, time, time

Here's a puzzle all about time. Level A is the easiest, Level B is a little bit harder, and Level C is the hardest. Choose one level to try, or try all three! It's up to you.



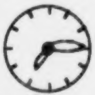
Level A

Across clues

5. The time 6:45 is the _____ as quarter to seven.

6. There are usually 30 days in a _______.

7. The time is seven- __________.



10. This word means try to do something quickly.

13. One _________ is shorter than one minute.

15. Excuse me, what ______ is it?--It's 3 o'clock.

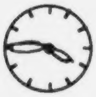
Down clues

1. This is a small clock you wear on your wrist.

2. Thirty minutes is one _____ hour.

3. I am busy. I don't ______ time.

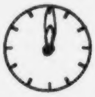
4. It's a quarter _____ four.



6. One ________ has 60 seconds.

8. I go to school in the evening. I'm ____ the evening class.

9. The time is ________ o'clock.



11. Twenty years is a ________ time.

12. Please come at 9:00 o'clock, and don't be _____ .

14. There are usually 24 hours in a _______.

Word list: day, fifteen, half, have, hurry, in, late, long, minute, month, same, second, time, to, twelve, watch.

Multi-level crossword puzzle, continued.

Level B

Across clues

5. My family came to the U.S. together. We came at the ______ time.
6. I pay the rent once a _________ .
7. One quarter-hour has _______ minutes.
10. You don't have to _________. We have plenty of time.
13. The ________ hand on the clock goes around once every minute.
15. Class is finished. It's _______ to go home.

Down clues

1. "Do you know what time it is?" "No, I'm sorry. My ________ is broken."
2. The bus takes 40 minutes to my home, but it's only 20 minutes by car. I can get home by car in ______ the time!
3. '_____ a good time!' means enjoy yourself.
4. Our class meets from 6 _____ 8 p.m.
6. Dinner will be ready in a _________, so please sit down.
8. My birthday is _______ March.
9. At midnight and noon, the time is ______ o'clock.
11. "How ______ does it take to walk to your home?" "About 30 minutes."
12. I have to hurry. I'm going to be ______ for class.
14. I work during the _______ and go to school at night.

Level C

Across clues

5. I am working and going to school at the _____ time.
6. Last ________ my telephone bill was really high.
7. At 7:45 it is _________ minutes before eight.
10. ________ up and finish eating—it's time to go!
13. He gave his answer quickly, in just one ____.
15. Your car is in good condition. I'm sure it will last a long _______.

Down clues

1. I didn't know what time it was because I wasn't wearing a _______.
2. In the middle of a sports event there is a break. This is called "______-time."
3. I'm sorry, I don't _______ time to talk to you right now. I'll call you later.
4. Spring is from March _____ June.
6. Do you have a _________? I have a short question to ask you.
8. "Am I late?" "No, you're just _____ time."
9. In this country usually the lunch hour is at _______ o'clock.
11. ______ ago I played the piano, but I don't remember how to play any more.
12. This word is the opposite of 'early.'
14. Some _______ I hope to get a good job.

Grammar grab-bag:
Combining sentences

*by **Olivia Ramos**, ESL teacher at the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, CVUT in Prague, Czech Republic. (Olivia is originally from Brazil and has taught ESL in the former Yugoslavia, Brazil and the Czech Republic. She is currently working on a master's degree at the University of Arizona.)*

When I was teaching at a Summer Intensive course in Slovenia I was given some grammar materials to teach the students. They were controlled exercises using:

however
even though
though
although
in spite of
despite
but

These exercises were not very interesting, so I had the idea of having the students write their own sentences to work with.

A chain activity

First we went over the example sentences so the students could see the structures that were used.

Then, each student took a piece of paper and wrote two sentences on it, like: "It was raining. She went for a walk." They each then passed the paper to their neighbor, who had to combine the sentences using a conjunction. (ie., "She went for a walk, even though it was raining." They continued writing and passing the papers around until each student had written a sentence on every paper.

Following that the students would go over the mistakes in pairs, while I walked around the class seeing how they were doing and helping out if necessary.

The resulting "stories" were funny, but contained good language examples that the students had written themselves.

Follow-up

The next day I wrote my own sentence on the board and asked the students to come and do the same as they did the day before. Later I asked them for feedback about the lesson and they seemed to have enjoyed it.

I noticed that when I later gave them a composition as homework they weren't afraid of using conjunctions.

Why it works

Students really enjoy learning how to make sophisticated-sounding sentences in English, and combining two simple sentences with a conjunction is a nice way to produce native-sounding English.

Editor's note: By the way, this is not such an easy exercise as it appears to be. Sentence combining is quite an art form. If you would like to have your students doing more of this kind of exercise, take a look at **Write Away**, Books 1, 2 and 3 by Donald Byrd and Gloria Gallingane (available from Heinle & Heinle, 1-800-237-0053) ISBN 0-8384-2717-0 .

Reading & discussion activity:
Scams

*by **Jan Hervieux**, Pensacola, Florida. Jan writes: "Beginning students need a lot of interesting practice in reading; therefore I write simple stories to introduce new vocabulary and to repeat words and forms already introduced. I take items from the newspaper or TV and try to write them using tenses and vocabulary with which the students are familiar."*

Read and discuss this story with your students. Ask them if they can tell you about other scams they have heard about.

This brings up a serious issue—how do you know who to trust in a new country? Have students brainstorm some strategies for deciding what to do in such situations.

Scams

Most people go to work every day and earn money to pay for their food. This is called "making a living."

Some men make a living for their family. Some women make a living for their family. Sometimes both the man and the woman work to make a living for their family.

Most people make their living honestly.

Some people do not make their living honestly. Some people get money this way: they trick other people. People who get money by tricking other people are called "scam artists." Sometimes it is easy for scam artists to trick an elderly person or a person who doesn't understand English very well.

Here is an example of a scam.

A nice-looking young man knocks on your door. You answer the door. The young man says, "I am working in this neighborhood. I am pruning trees. My truck is broken. I need $14 for a small part for my truck."

The young man looks embarrassed. He says, "Please may I borrow $14 from you? I'll pay the money back to you when I finish pruning the trees."

You feel sorry for the young man, so you lend him the $14. He goes away with the $14 in his hand. You never see him again.

You are the victim of a scam!

Cultural activity:

Famous Quotations

*by **Eleanor Gard**. Eleanor teaches at Connelley Technical Institute and Adult Education Center in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She has used this activity with her high intermediate students (40's to low 60's on the Michigan Test of Aural Proficiency). Her most recent class had 25 students from 14 different countries, with varying levels of previous education.*

Need for knowledge

I would like to share a successful activity with your readers. I have labeled this activity "Famous Quotations." During past class sessions I realized that while students may have a good foundation in English they often have little or no "cultural literacy." I would mention a "famous" figure of Western history and they would be totally unfamiliar with that person. Or I would share a famous quotation that came to my mind, but it would be totally foreign and new to them.

Cultural sharing

I also realized that each of my students came to class with a cultural wealth that may be unknown to the other students from other countries and to myself, the teacher. I wanted two things—for them to become more literate about Western culture, and for each of them to help the rest of us to become more literate about their culture. Indonesians can learn from Russians; Venezuelans can learn from Vietnamese; the teacher can learn from everyone.

How to do it

The strategy is as follows:

1) I Introduce 10 to 15 varied quotations from Ancient Greece and Rome, Europe, the U.S., etc.that are well-known in our culture. Students usually recognize one or two, and a debate may follow as they discuss the meaning of the quotations. (I try to remain in the background and only speak up when needed.)

2) I assign each of them to choose one quotation from their culture to present and explain to the class. In this way the individual student is the "expert."

3) Class time is given for each to write their quotation in marker pen on pieces of oak tag. Some even use calligraphy to enhance their presentations. This year I got the brainstorm to have them also write the quotation in the original language to be displayed side by side with the English Translation. The result: a beautiful wall display!

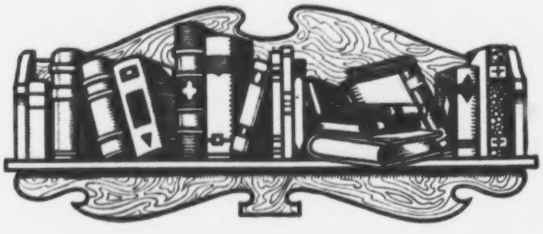
4) Each day one or two students present their quotations. I find they are highly motivated to communicate to the other students. These presentations are interspersed with our normal classroom activities.

5) When all have presented their quotations, I prepare a photocopied list of the quotations to be given to each student.

High interest

Before class and during breaks students go up and read the quotations over and perhaps point out something to another student. "Is this your quotation? We have something similar in my country."

I found this activity to be quite successful. The students are highly motivated, perhaps because their heritage and culture are honored. There is real spontaneous communication between students. Everyone learns something about another culture. The teacher perhaps learns most of all!



On the following page is a selection of famous quotations you could use for the first part of this activity. Or, you could browse through your Bartlett's and select your own list.

Variation

For the upcoming election season, you could do this activity using the political slogans which students may be exposed to in the media but might not understand. You could also choose some political slogans from past elections to discuss. Then students could share and explain political slogans from their countries.

Famous Quotations

"Love it or leave it!" —Popular saying during the 1960's in the U.S.

"Let them eat cake." —Attributed to Marie Antoinette, Queen of France 1770

"Eureka!" (I have found it!) —Archimedes, Greek 200 B.C.

"Go West, young man, and grow up with the country." —Horace Greeley, New York Tribune 1851.

"Vini, Vidi, Vinci." (I came, I saw, I conquered.) —Julius Caesar, Roman Emperor born 44 B.C.

"Know thyself."
"The unexamined life is not worth living."
"I only know that I don't know anything." —Socrates, Greek philosopher 470-309 B.C.

"One for all, and all for one." —Alexander Dumas, French, in *The Three Musketeers.*

"Give me liberty or give me death." —Patrick Henry, American 1736-1799.

"I never met a man I didn't like." —Will Rogers, American humorist 1879-1935.

"Ask not what your country can do for you; rather ask what you can do for your country."
—John F. Kennedy, U.S. President, 1961.

"A chicken in every pot." —Herbert Hoover, U.S. President 1924-1932.

"A little learning is a dangerous thing." —Alexander Pope, English 1688-1744.

"Russia is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside of an enigma."
—Winston Churchill, British Prime Minister 1874-1965.

"Birds of a feather flock together." —Cervantes, Spanish 1547-1616.

"'Tis better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all."
—Alfred Lord Tennyson, English 1807-1892.

"It's nothing personal; it's only business."
"I'll make him an offer he can't refuse." —American movie, *The Godfather*.

"Go on, make my day." —Clint Eastwood in the American movie *Dirty Harry*.

Holiday activity:

Jack O'Lantern "operation"

by Jean Hanslin, St. Paul, Minnesota. Jean has sent us an activity that's an"operation" in two senses of the word—a traditional surgical procedure performed on a pumpkin which your students might like to learn about, as well as a language learning activity that involves a number of steps to describe an action. She writes:

With beginning or intermediate level classes, I've always used a Jack O'Lantern "operation" to introduce the spooky customs of the Halloween season.

First, we identify the needed objects which are laid out on a table in the front of the room: pumpkin, newspaper, marker, knife, spoon, candle and matches. Then, I explain that each learner will participate in transforming the pumpkin into a Jack O'Lantern. I write out the tasks on strips of paper (see below) and let each student choose one.

If it's a very low level or a poorly attended class, I keep the more difficult tasks and demonstrate those. If the students are quite English proficient, some can take two tasks. One by one, as their number is called out, they approach the table, read their sentence aloud and perform their task.

They interact admirably as they figure out their task and assist one another, and they are always impressed by the results of their labors. At the next class session, I ask them if they remember the name of the Halloween pumpkin they made and distribute a handout showing other symbols of the season which we identify together.

Follow-up

Here are a few language learning ideas you can try with this story:

- To review the story, have a student pantomime the actions while you read the sentences aloud.
- Next, have a student pantomime an action, and ask another student to describe it by saying the corresponding sentence from memory. (This is a challenging activity!)
- At the next session, distribute the story on strips again, but *without* numbers. Have students put the sentences in the correct order, then read the whole story aloud.
- Give the story as a dictation, then have the students write the sentences on the board so everyone can correct their own dictation.
- The possibilities are endless!

If you'd like to use more "hands-on" operations like this with your students, see ***Operations in English*** *by Gayle Nelson and Thomas Winters (Pro Lingua Associates, 1-800-366-4775) ISBN 0-86647-074-3. This little book has 55 such sequences, with teaching suggestions.*

1. Cover the table with newspaper.
2. Pick up the knife and cut a circle around the stem of the pumpkin. Take off the top.
3. Pick up the spoon and scrape out the inside of the pumpkin.
4. Pick up the marker and draw two eyes on the pumpkin.
5. Pick up the marker and draw a triangle nose on the pumpkin.
6. Pick up the marker and draw a big mouth on the pumpkin.
7. Pick up the knife and cut out the eyes.
8. Pick up the knife and cut out the nose.
9. Pick up the knife and cut out the mouth.
10. Pick up the spoon and scrape out the pumpkin again until it is very clean inside.
11. Clean up and throw away the mess.
12. Pick up the candle, light it, and put it inside the pumpkin.
13. Put the top on the jack o'lantern and turn off the lights.

Tools & techniques:
Using "CNN Newsroom" in ESL class

*by **Bill Tigue**, Evans Community Adult School, Los Angeles, California (from an article published in the school newsletter, **Reflections.**)*

Bill told us on the phone that he's been using this program in his teaching for about 4 years. He uses it with his mid-intermediates and up, and warns that it doesn't work with beginners. He has some creative ideas for using the program, and says he can build an entire unit around just a 2 or 3 minute segment that is of great interest to the students. Obviously this takes some preparation, but Bill seems to think it's well worth it.

CNN cable television broadcasts a free service very early each weekday morning internationally that makes "current events" sparkle for students in high school or adult programs.

"CNN Newsroom" is broadcast each weekday morning 3:45 a.m. ET (this varies depending on your location) for 15 minutes. Anyone who receives CNN can tape the commercial-free program legally using a VCR. Then you have a fresh news/current events/world culture tape for use in your class that very day.

Flexible tool

You, the teacher, decide when, how, how much, or even if you want to use the program that day.

I've used these cablecasts for several years in assorted teaching assignments. The program vocabulary, structure and pace preclude its use for class levels below ESL 4 (intermediate). I've tried the program as low as ESL 3 when I taught that level and felt that understanding it was difficult for many of those students. However, the more advanced students all responded enthusiastically and positively.

Putting it to work

I use the 15-minute programs a maximum of three times weekly with a five-day class; and two times weekly with a four-day class. The short format of the news/current events show works best at the very beginning of the classes. I also find it soon helps attendance if I start the tape almost precisely when the class is supposed to begin.

Topics on "Newsroom" have ranged widely from the 1991 revolution in the former USSR, through special segments on Vietnam or the conflict between Armenia and Georgia, to analyses of of the U.S. political scene prior to the 1992 elections here.

Every day the cablecast starts with a review of the top news stories—national and/or international. Then, different "desks" or departments are featured, which might include International, Business and Commerce, Science News, and others.

Native speaker audience

The program and its reporters and stories aim to reach and teach U.S. high school students. That is the level of most vocabulary and much of the cultural literacy needed to catch all the references, idioms, etc. For that reason, ESL students will need some help in understanding the language and content.

Daily lesson plans are available, for a nominal fee, from major computer user networks, such as CompuServe. The lesson plans can also be received by fax. I have not used the lesson plans myself, but still believe strongly in the programs as a useful teaching tool.

Bill's technique

I use the programs for sparking discussions, and for vocabulary development and growth, usually writing several words on the chalkboard while students watch the show. We then attack/analyze the new words (usually just 5 new words per day). Sometimes, we discuss the subject of the broadcast, and students often have experiences to share which help in the discussion, particularly about international news.

To get on the mailing list for CNN Newsroom, or to get information about signing up your school, contact Turner Educational Services, Inc. by writing: TESI, 105 Terry Drive, Suite 120, Newtown, PA 18940-9989.

Within the U.S., call 1-800-344-6219.
Outside the U.S., call 44-71-637-6700.
E-mail address: SMTP%"cnn-newsroom-request@tenet.edu"

Minigrants report:
A writing incentive project

Jane Brody of the Sterling Municipal Library in Baytown, Texas was awarded one of our Minigrants again in 1993.

Her project offered a prize book for every student who submitted three essays. Students from several programs participated, including: Literacy Volunteers of America, Families Learning Together, and the Exxon Occupational Literacy Program.

The incentive project had three important benefits, according to Jane. One was getting the students to write more, thereby practicing and improving their writing skills; another was increasing students' confidence and self-esteem in writing and expressing themselves; and another was adding a book to the home library of students with limited incomes.

The literacy program publishes a quarterly journal of student writings, and having a story published is an additional incentive to the students to write.

The following are selected from some of the student's stories:

My Car
by Raul M., Jr.

I am very proud of my car. It is a 1984 four-door Chevrolet Caprice. It has a 305 c.i. motor and automatic transmission. It is maroon in color with the original paint. I wax it a lot. I change the oil, plugs, gasoline and filter. I have put in a carburetor kit. It has dark tinted glass. It has 93,000 miles on it, but it doesn't use oil. It looks like new.

Learning English
by Ignacia Y.

Today I decided to come to San Jacinto Elementary. Learning English is important in my life because I want a better job and I want to help my children. I also want to be able to talk with anyone at any place.

I have different jobs. I want to be able to write and express myself. Some day I would like to get a diploma.

Armed Forces
by Lupe O.

On the first day of January, 1994, I was in San Cristobal de las Casas. This is in the state of Chiapas in the country of Mexico. Companies of hundreds of armed people, in the name of Zapatistas, claimed liberation. I feel very bad about this and embarrassed for Mexico.

News & notes

Upcoming conferences

✦ October 7-8, 1994—**Texas TESOL IV** in Houston, Texas. Fax: 713-662-9224.

✦ October 13-15, 1994—**Carolina TESOL** in Greensboro, North Carolina. Call:910-765-9755.

✦ October 14-15, 1994—**Oregon TESOL** in Portland, Oregon. Call: 503-737-6986.

✦ October 20-22, 1994—**Rocky Mountain TESOL** in Tucson, Arizona. Call: 602-621-9943.

✦ October 22, 1994—**California TESOL** in San Marcos, California. Fax: 619-941-0597.

✦ October 28-30, 1994—**New York State TESOL** in Uniondale, New York. Call: 516-877-1260.

✦ October 29, 1994—**Baltimore Area TESOL** in Catonsville, Maryland. Call: 410-516-5122.

✦ November 1-4, 1994—**American Association of Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE)** annual conference in Nashville, Tennessee. Contact: Drew Allbritten, 202-429-5131.

✦ November 2-5, 1994—**Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc. (LVA)** national conference in San Diego, California. Call: 315-445-8000.

✦ November 3-5, 1994—**Mid-West Regional TESOL** in St. Louis, Missouri. Call: 314-651-2551.

✦ November 3-6, 1994—**National Multicultural Institute** training courses in Washington, DC. Call: 202-483-0700.

✦ November 5, 1994—**Three Rivers TESOL** in Wheeling, West Virginia. Call: 412-624-5913.

✦ November 11-12, 1994—**Oklahoma TESOL** in Guthrie, Oklahoma. Call: 405-744-9474.

✦ November 12, 1994—**Eastern Pennsylvania TESOL**, in Newark, Delaware. Call: 302-831-2674.

✦ November 12, 1994—**Indiana TESOL** in Indianapolis, Indiana. Call: 317-274-2188.

✦ November 17-19, 1994—**Colorado TESOL** in Northglenn, Colorado. Call: 303-492-5547.

✦ November 18-19, 1994—**Puerto Rico TESOL** in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

✦ November 18-20, 1994—**American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)** annual conference in Atlanta, Georgia. Call: 914-963-8830.

Minigrants awarded by Hands-on English

Hands-on English awarded its 1994 Minigrants awards for the following projects:

Ducks in a Row: Super Sequences by Sandra J. Schwartz, Denver, Colorado. The project will have students creating their own sequence cards from photos for language practice.

A Non-native View of the Amish Subculture by Cecil D. Edwards, Urbana, Illinois. The project will take ESL students on a field trip to gather cultural material on the Amish.

Student Evaluation of Common Consumer Items by Marilyn Kwitkin, Plainview, New York. Students will work in groups to do some comparative shopping, then recommend the brands they rate most highly.

News Flash: Using and Producing Newspapers in the ESL Classroom by Margi Wald, Houston, Texas. Students will plan and produce a school-wide newspaper.

Anthology of English Essays by Alex M. Peck, South Bohemia University, Czech Republic. The students will select and edit the 100 best essays written in a semester. They will produce an anthology for use as writing models.

Becoming familiar with the Nebraska State Penitentiary Environment, by Eileen Kunz, Lincoln, Nebraska. The project will have current students prepare orientation materials for new inmates.

E.S.L. Photo Album, by Mary K. Branisteanu, Roanoke, Virginia. The class will keep a scrapbook of photos of students and events for the year as a record of their progress.

Next year's awards

Applications for the 1995 awards, due April 30, 1995, will soon be available from the *Hands-on English* office. The number and size of next year's awards has not yet been determined.

Anyone working with ESL students is welcome to apply, whether teacher or tutor. The proposed project should be a practical, "hands-on" activity for the students.

Hints & tips

Here are a few more tips from our readers. If you have a helpful hint that works for you, let us know and we'll pass it along!

Color coding

Dianne E. Scott in Nashville, Tennessee, writes: Use different colored markers or chalk when talking about different parts of a sentence. For example, red for nouns, blue for verbs, yellow for adverbs, etc. This is a little extra trouble when writing on the board but really helps students to see the different parts of speech. Visual cues give students additional information to work with.

Where's the teacher?

Mary Foret, in Mission, Kansas suggests: If students seem shy or "stiff" during pair or group practice, *leave the room*, and they'll loosen up. They will become more aware of each other and their own responsibility to lead.

Copy saving tip

To prevent having to make lots of photo copies of an exercise that just get thrown away later, Phyllis Colter of Imperial Valley LVA in El Centro, California, has a great idea: Use the original copy inside a clear plastic cover and have the students write on it with a dry erase pen. This works well with puzzles, quizzes, etc. that you'll use again with other students.

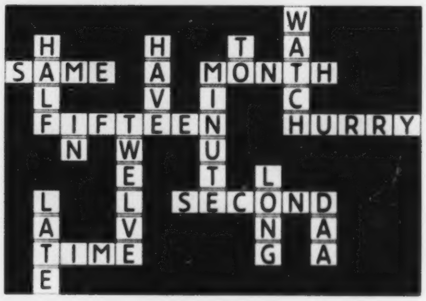
Especially for tutors

For students who are very anxious about speaking, Fiona Savage of Murdoch, Australia recommends this technique: Take some photographs to your next meeting—perhaps of your family. Use these as a conversation topic, and discuss whatever responses your student might have to them. Then encourage your student to bring some photos to show you, and use these as the focus of the next session.

Fiona says she finds using something familiar like photos reduces the immediate anxiety somewhat by directing the student's attention away from the language focus.

Puzzle solution

for "Time, time, time" on page 4 of this issue.



Classified ads

To place a classified ad, send your notice of 30 words or less with US $10 (subscribers get a discount of 50%) to: Hands-on English, *P.O. Box 256, Crete, NE 68333 USA. Fax/phone: (402) 826-5426. Toll free call-in 1-800-ESL- HAND.*

Publications:

ORBIS PUBLICATIONS, P.O. Box 4587, Oceanside, CA 92052. Distributor of Bilingual Dictionaries (60 languages) and Publisher of the newest ESL course consisting of several integrated modules. (Free brochure available)

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Combined, 3-year index of *Hands-on English* articles in Vols. I–III is available free of charge upon request. Back issues are available at US $4 per copy (this includes shipping costs).

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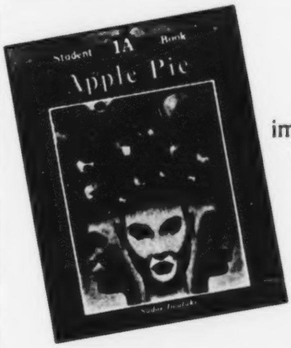

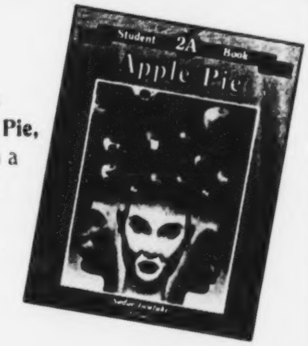

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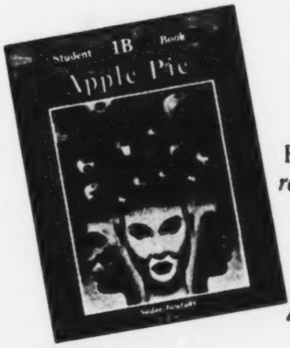
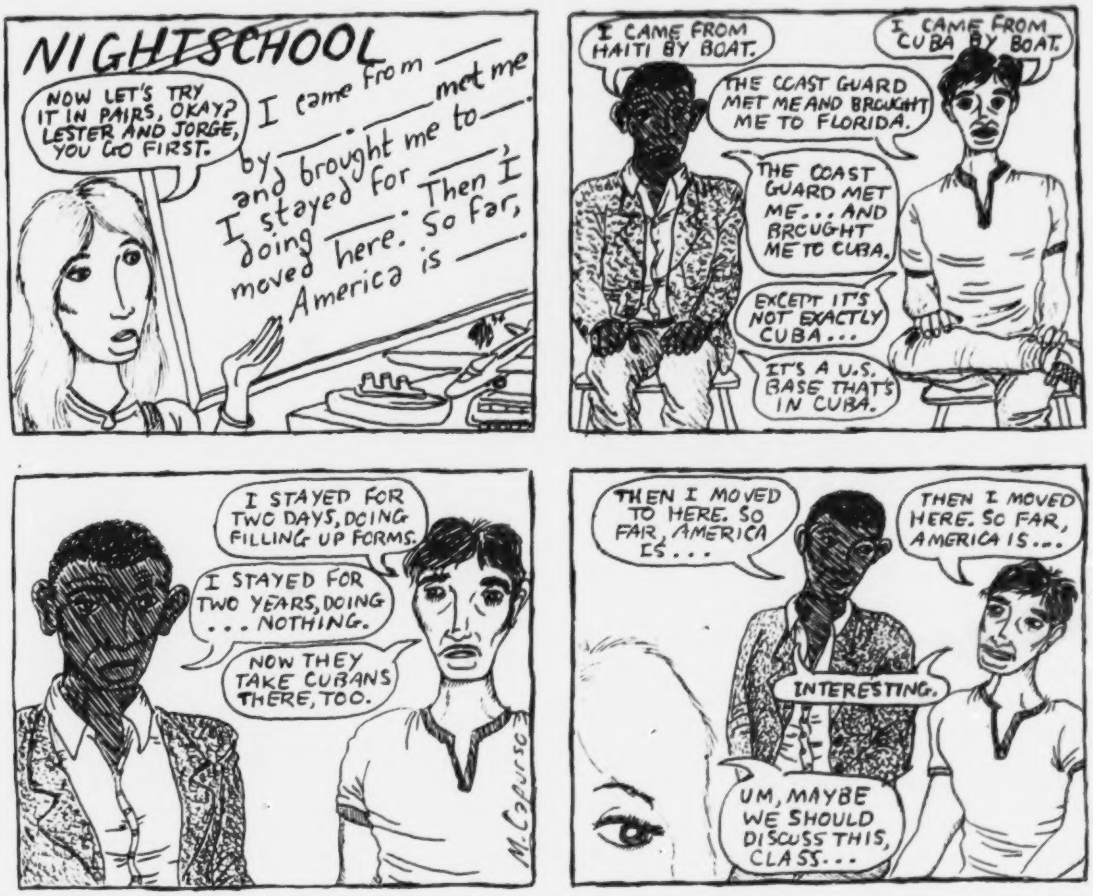


Student 2B Book
Apple Pie


NIGHTSCHOOL
NOW LET'S TRY IT IN PAIRS, OKAY? LESTER AND JORGE, YOU GO FIRST.
I came from ___ by ___. ___ met me and brought me to ___. I stayed for ___, doing ___. Then I moved here. So far, America is ___.
I CAME FROM HAITI BY BOAT.
I CAME FROM CUBA BY BOAT.
THE COAST GUARD MET ME AND BROUGHT ME TO FLORIDA.
THE COAST GUARD MET ME... AND BROUGHT ME TO CUBA.
EXCEPT IT'S NOT EXACTLY CUBA...
IT'S A U.S. BASE THAT'S IN CUBA.
I STAYED FOR TWO DAYS, DOING FILLING UP FORMS.
I STAYED FOR TWO YEARS, DOING ... NOTHING.
NOW THEY TAKE CUBANS THERE, TOO.
M. Caruso
THEN I MOVED TO HERE. SO FAR, AMERICA IS...
THEN I MOVED HERE. SO FAR, AMERICA IS...
INTERESTING.
UM, MAYBE WE SHOULD DISCUSS THIS, CLASS...

Hands-on
English
A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult ESL
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Hands-on English

A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult English as a second language

Editorial:

The missing card

We have been processing a lot of new orders recently. One day we opened an envelope that contained a check, with a request for a new subscription written on a 3x5 card. We turned the card over, and on the back was written: "#2—Touch the floor."

As we sat there, smiling at this piece of teaching evidence, we tried to imagine all of the possible activities this card may have been used for. Of course, it might have been a grammar lesson—part of a demonstration of the present continuous. Teacher: "What are you doing?" Student: "I am touching the floor."

Or, it might have been part of a Total Physical Response (TPR) lesson for beginning students where they listen to commands given by the teacher and perform them. Or perhaps it was an instruction card for a student to read to the other students.

Another possibility was that the card was #2 in a series of instructions about how to do something, but we couldn't imagine what. How to perform a Russian line-dance? (ie., #3, Kick your left leg in the air.) Or—How to rewire an electrical outlet safely? This didn't seem very likely, though.

Suddenly we thought of games—it seemed more than likely this card was part of a game. How about a guessing game? One student mimes the action, and the other students have to guess what he is doing. "You are touching the floor." "Right!" Or for more advanced students, they have to guess what adverb is being portrayed, such as "carefully," or "quickly."

Perhaps this teacher had devised a series of puzzles for the students to solve, like scrambled sentences, and this was the answer to #2? The team that completes all ten first wins the game. That sounded like fun—we could imagine them running back and forth checking their answers.

We even started to worry that perhaps by inadvertently sending us this card, the teacher's lesson might be disrupted. "What? Nobody has #2?" or even worse, "Teacher, we can't find #2!" We wondered if we should send it back just in case.

The missing card reminded us of how much we love teaching, and how much we enjoy having contact with all those teaching enthusiasts out there. So, happy teaching, keep up the good work, and—remember to send us a card once in a while!

—the Editor

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Hands-on
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Permission to photocopy: This periodical is copyrighted. However, we invite teachers and tutors with a paid subscription (or whose institution has a paid subscription) to make as many copies as they need for their own classroom use. (Please don't make copies for colleagues! We survive on subscriptions.)

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About the publication

Hands-on English is a small, independent publication that was started in 1991. The editor is a former ESL teacher who has taught ESL in many settings, including adult education programs, a refugee program, community college, and a university intensive English program. . .and survived to write about it!

Articles and ideas are contributed by experienced teachers and tutors, including our readers. If you have an article or teaching suggestion you would like to share, we welcome your input!

About the Minigrants program

Hands-on English awards a few small grants (of $100 each) annually for practical classroom projects. Applications are due April 30, and are available upon request.

Season's Greetings from your editor!

(By the way, does anybody know where the power switch is on this thing??)

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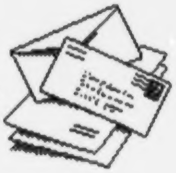
IV-4

Letters



Note from the Editor: *Nearly 30 of our readers called this fall for some samples to take to a conference. Many thanks to all of you! We appreciate your help in spreading the word about* Hands-on English*! And by the way, it's working—our circulation has reached 1,500 and is still growing.*

Visuals?

Christina Shaw in Texas called us with the news that she's got a classroom of her own this year for the first time! No more "traveling teacher!" She said she feels like a kid in a candy store and would like some ideas for posters and things she could put up in the room to inspire the students. Any ideas?

Software needs

"I really enjoy and get a lot out of *Hands-on English*. My question for you or your readers: Does anyone know of a good software program—or any software program—to use for writing exercises, scrambling sentences or list of words to match, writing cloze paragraphs, etc? I'm sure there must be one somewhere!"

—Gail Boehme
Goleta, CA

A program that we have used and liked is called "Storyboard," by Wida Software. The students see a screen of blanks and have to reconstruct a paragraph by guessing the correct words. (This is similar to a cloze exercise.) This program is available from Athelstan Publications, 619-689-1757. Ask for their free newsletter on technology and language learning as well.

Perhaps our readers can make other recommendations?

Poetry

"In one of your recent issues someone was asking for poetry to use with ESL students. We have used a collection of poetry in a Dover Thrift Edition that cost only $1.00. It has many of the most familiar poems that everyone has read or heard in childhood. What is also valuable is they are strongly rhythmical and it seems to us great for intonation. Adult students can read them to their children. Also, some familiarity with this type of literature is useful as a cultural background."

—Mary Callahan
Wyoming Valley Literacy
Kingston, PA

ESL for business

Laurie Cohen at the Business English Alliance in New York is interested in activities for foreign business executives. Topics of interest are: business meetings, negotiation skills, giving presentations, telephone skills, interviewing techniques, business writing and social etiquette. If you have activities that might work for this purpose, send them in! *Hands-on English* is interested, too!

GED writing prep

Louise Edge in Bellevue, Nebraska needs some suggestions for helping her ESL students prepare for the GED essay test. Many of her students are Asians, and have difficulty with syntax. If you have experience with this problem and would like to make some suggestions, let us know!

A real career

In a past editorial we quoted a former ABE teacher who asked, "Do you think this kind of teaching will ever become a real career?" Well, apparently it can be—one reader responded with this description of her program:

"I'm an Adult ESL techer in a large program, the Family Learning Center in Rochester, New York (800 students). We don't make quite what city school teachers do, but we're close. . .and our students are more receptive and appreciative. Yes, it is a *real career*. There's a long waiting list of teachers wanting to get into our program. We love it."

—Rose Boice
Family Learning Center
Rochester, NY

Happy customer

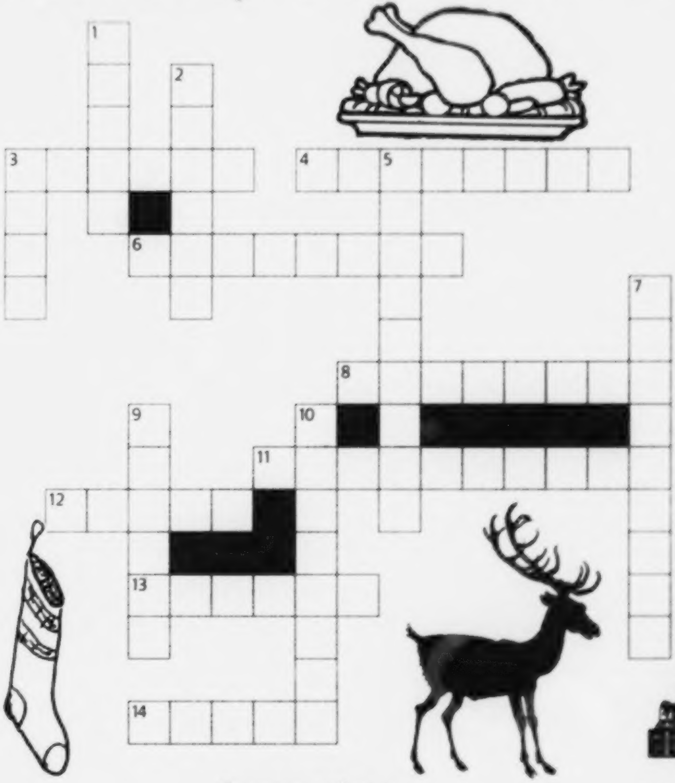
"Love this helpful magazine/newsletter! It's helped me with ideas and given me courage! Thanks a bunch!"

—Marsha D. Kennedy
Pittsburgh, PA

(Don't feel bad, Marsha—we never know what to call this publication either. A magaletter? newsazine? Anyway, glad you like it.)

/

Crossword puzzle:
Holiday customs—Christmas



Across clues

3. Some people cook a ______ for Christmas dinner, just like Thanksgiving.
4. Lots of people complain because they have to go ________ to buy presents.
6. Children hang up a ________ the night before Christmas.
8. Santa Claus drives a sleigh pulled by animals that look like horses, but are _____.
11. Little children believe that on Christmas Eve, _______ _______ comes to bring them presents.
12. Some people send Christmas _____ to their friends and relatives.
13. People put _______ on their Christmas tree, and sometimes on their house, too.
14. Traditional Christmas colors are red and _____.

Down clues

1. A friendly greeting at Christmas time is "____ Christmas!"
2. A large, round decoration some people put on the door is called a _______.
3. Some children receive candy, ______ and clothes at Christmas.
5. People buy a tree and put beautiful things on it. These are called ________.
7. Sometimes people write "Xmas" instead of _______.
9. Special songs for this holiday are called ____.
10. Children do not go to school during the holiday season. They have a long ______.

To the instructor: If your students are new to this culture they may be very interested in learning about holiday customs here. When discussing Christmas, it is useful to distinguish between the religious aspects of the holiday and the many customs which are *not* religious (such as Santa Claus, Christmas trees, some carols and cards, etc.) but are just for fun. Many of these traditions came to us from German, Scandinavian and English immigrants.

Have your students observe and identify the (almost incessant!) Christmas symbols they see and hear in the media and categorize them according to whether they are religious or not. Discuss separation of church and state, and why they may see Christmas trees in school but not nativity scenes.

Idea file

Group story writing

Here's a nice group story writing activity that is very useful for reviewing topics the students have already studied.

A familiar story

Choose a story or topic that the students have read and studied about recently. It should be something the students are quite familiar with. For example: the Thanksgiving story, if you have discussed it in class. Essentially the students will be re-creating, or retelling the story.

How to do it

Ask students to sit in small groups. This activity works best with about 4 students in each group. Give each student a paper with the first sentence of a story already printed on it. (For example: "Thanksgiving is a holiday that was celebrated by some of the first immigrants to this country.") Alternatively, you could give them only a title (for example: The Thanksgiving Story.)

Tell the students that they will be writing the story, but each student can only write one sentence. Give the students a few minutes to write their first sentence, then call "time" and have them pass the papers around to the next student

Continue writing and passing the papers around until the stories are finished. Each group will have several stories that are slightly different. Ask each group to choose the one they like best and read it aloud to the rest of the class.

Why it works

Students get a chance to practice some writing without too much pressure about the result. Each student can contribute according to his or her own abilities, so this works well with a multi-level group. Lots of repetition provides plenty of reinforcement for vocabulary and structure in this exercise.

Follow-up

Have the students work on revising their group's story to improve and correct it.

Hint: Sometimes this activity works better if the students have already done it once before, so they can see how their contribution will fit into the whole. You might want to try this activity first with a VERY simple story that you're sure everyone can tell. Then try it again with a more complex story.

Group story writing for review

Purpose:	Writing practice, reading, review. Also practice in revising.
Level:	Adaptable to any level, also multi-level.
Time:	About 40 minutes per story.
Materials:	Paper; a familiar story topic.

1. Divide the students into groups of 4 or 5.
2. Hand out a piece of paper to each student. Give them the title or the first line of the story.
3. Ask students to begin writing. Each student writes only one sentence, then passes the paper to the left. Repeat until the stories are finished.
4. Have the students read each of the stories aloud in their group and then select the best one.
5. Ask someone from each group to read their best story aloud to the rest of the class.
6. If there is time, have the students revise and improve the story together, handing in the resulting story.

From the field:

The REAL TEST of student learning

—*by **Fiona Armstrong**, Adult & Continuing Education, New York City Public Schools, Brooklyn.*

Testing is always a difficult issue for adult ESL. Here's a great method of finding out what students have learned, by having them help to design the test themselves! If your program requires some kind of standardized testing on a regular basis, the REAL TEST would be an excellent supplement to that process, and much more meaningful to your students.

Give your students a REAL test of what they learned

Step 1: Listing topics

About a week before scheduled testing, I ask my students what they have learned in our class. They go through their notebooks and reread what they wrote in the last 3 months. Then I elicit topics on the board. We cover the board with different items.

They categorize these topics into three or four big categories: In the news; American holidays and history, and different customs; how to take care of ourselves, etc.

Step 2: Writing questions

They now break up into cooperative groups, choose a Secretary to write for the group, and start to make questions for each category. If there is time, each group chooses a Reporter who reads or lists their questions on the board.

I choose about 30 questions the students have written and type them up in a REAL TEST format, adding a map from the news or a picture (body parts, etc.) to be labeled. The final page has directions to do a spoken task on tape: call 911, make a doctor's appointment, complain to the landlord, describe a criminal, etc. I make a copy for everyone.

Step 3: Taking the test

When students come to be tested, a tape recorder is set up for them to do the taped part of the test. They receive the written form to be completed by the time regular (standardized) testing is over and they start on it immediately, finishing it at home.

Step 4: Reviewing the test

The following week, we all listen as a group to the tapes the students made and write the vital information provided by each person (name, address, emergency, problem, etc). If we cannot hear or understand it, the class asks the student to redo it later.

Then we go over the answers to the written questions, either in small groups with each group being responsible for writing up the answers to a certain number of questions, or as a whole class. At home they study the questions and answers.

Step 5: Practicing test questions orally

Finally, each student chooses one question from the test to ask in a "One question interview."

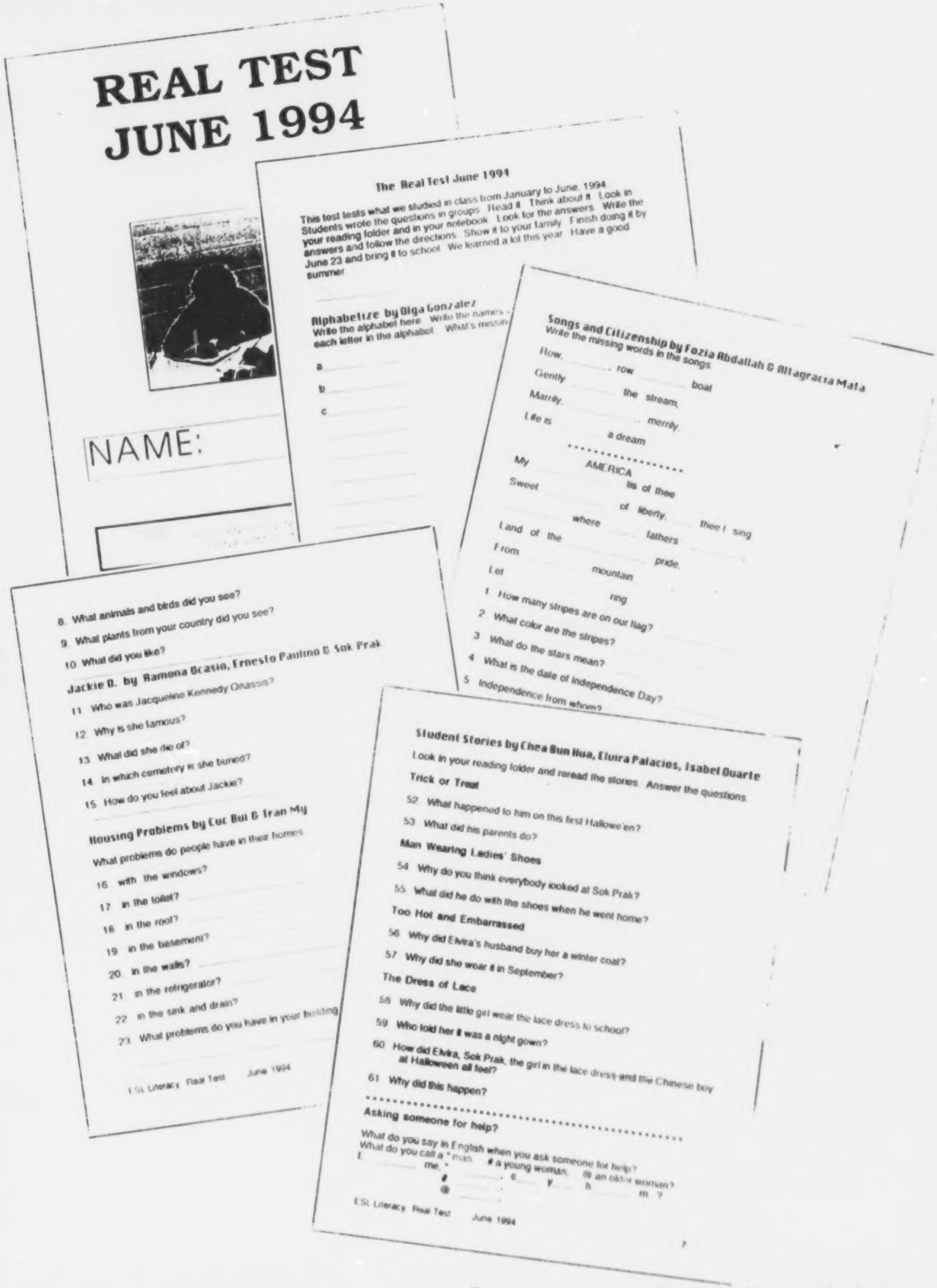
They each write their question on a blank sheet, and under it list all the students' names. Students stand and circulate, asking their own questions, listening for correct oral answers, and checking off the name of each person who answers correctly. They also answer the other students' questions.

[Editor's note: To find out more about using a One question interview, see another article by Fiona Armstrong in Vol.II, No.1, p.6 of *Hands-on English*.]

The results

In the process of working on the REAL TEST, students have written questions, answered them in writing at home with their families, corrected their answers and finally answered them all orally. They really know what they have learned after doing the REAL TEST!

Reproduced on the next page are several pages from a REAL TEST. Note that the student authors for each section are given credit right on the test! The actual test was seven pages long and included scanned-in photos of some of the students on the front and back covers.



REAL TEST
JUNE 1994

NAME:

The Real Test June 1994

This test tests what we studied in class from January to June, 1994. Students wrote the questions in groups. Read it. Think about it. Look in your reading folder and in your notebook. Look for the answers. Write the answers and follow the directions. Show it to your family. Finish doing it by June 23 and bring it to school. We learned a lot this year. Have a good summer.

Alphabetize by Olga Gonzalez

Write the alphabet here. Write the names

each letter in the alphabet. What's missin

a______

b______

c______

Songs and Citizenship by Fozia Abdallah & Altagracia Mata

Write the missing words in the songs

Row, ______, row ______ boat

Gently ______ the stream,

Merrily, ______, merrily,

Life is ______ a dream

* * *

My ______ AMERICA

Sweet ______ tis of thee

______ of liberty, ______ thee I sing

______ where ______ fathers ______

Land of the ______ pride,

From ______ mountain

Let ______ ring

1 How many stripes are on our flag?

2 What color are the stripes?

3 What do the stars mean?

4 What is the date of Independence Day?

5 Independence from whom?

---

8. What animals and birds did you see?

9. What plants from your country did you see?

10. What did you like?

Jackie O. by Ramona Ocasio, Ernesto Paulino & Sok Prak

11 Who was Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis?

12 Why is she famous?

13 What did she die of?

14 In which cemetery is she buried?

15 How do you feel about Jackie?

Housing Problems by Cuc Bui & Tran My

What problems do people have in their homes

16 with the windows?

17 in the toilet? ______

18 in the roof?

19 in the basement?

20 in the walls? ______

21 in the refrigerator?

22 in the sink and drain?

23 What problems do you have in your building

ESL Literacy Real Test June 1994

Student Stories by Chea Bun Hua, Elvira Palacios, Isabel Duarte

Look in your reading folder and reread the stories. Answer the questions.

Trick or Treat

52 What happened to him on this first Hallowe'en?

53 What did his parents do?

Man Wearing Ladies' Shoes

54 Why do you think everybody looked at Sok Prak?

55 What did he do with the shoes when he went home?

Too Hot and Embarrassed

56 Why did Elvira's husband buy her a winter coat?

57 Why did she wear it in September?

The Dress of Lace

58 Why did the little girl wear the lace dress to school?

59 Who told her it was a night gown?

60 How did Elvira, Sok Prak, the girl in the lace dress and the Chinese boy at Halloween all feel?

61 Why did this happen?

* * *

Asking someone for help?

What do you say in English when you ask someone for help?
What do you call a * man, # a young woman, @ an older woman?
E______ me, * ______, e___ y___ h______ m ?
______.
@ ______.

ESL Literacy Real Test June 1994

7

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Tools & techniques:

Classroom design

Are you flexible?

There's no one best way to arrange your classroom for language teaching. But, the layout of the chairs and tables can have a big impact on what kind of learning takes place! Ideally you should be able to change the arrangement according to what kind of activities the class is doing. The variety will not only provide just the right kind of tailored environment for each activity, but changing things around will also keep your students on their toes.

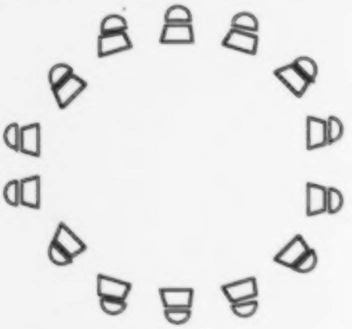
Here are a few possibilities for classroom arrangements, with the best uses for each one listed, as well as their pros and cons.

1. Circle style

Uses: All whole-class activities work well in this format.

Pros: Students can see and hear each other clearly. It's flexible; easy to pair up by moving the chairs slightly.

Cons: Can become unwieldy and noisy when the group is larger than about 20.

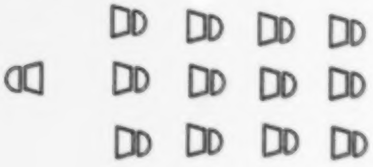


2. Rows

Uses: Test-taking and test-taking practice; dictation, presentations.

Pros: Students can see the blackboard, the overhead projector and the speaker easily.

Cons: Students can't see each other. Not conducive to interaction or much participation.

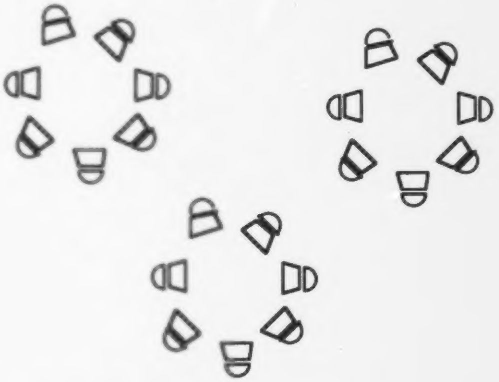


3. Three-ring circus

Uses: Multi-level classes where students need to work at different levels.

Pros: The teacher can move easily from group to group. Students can focus on a task best suited to them.

Cons: Can require a lot of preparation by the teacher. Not as flexible; once established these groups are hard to break up again.

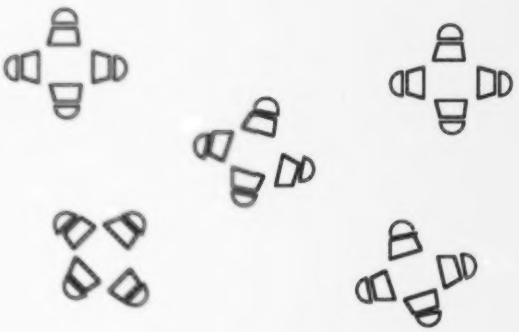


4. Small groups

Uses: Short tasks, games, projects, problem-solving; any activity designed to get students speaking together.

Pros: Students will often speak more in small groups and have more chances to participate actively.

Cons: Monitoring what is going on in each group takes some expertise. Students sometimes feel they are not getting enough error correction.

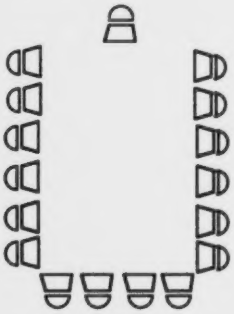


5. Boardroom style

Uses: Formal discussions and decision-making sessions; writing activities.

Pros: Like the circle style, students can easily see and hear each other, but the atmosphere is more intimate.

Cons: Not very flexible; if used routinely can be boring.



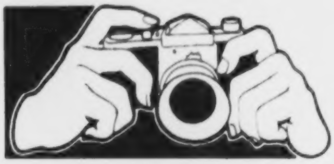
If you have larger tables in your classroom instead of small desks, most of these styles can still be used—just don't be shy about shoving the tables around!

Others?

There may be other ways of organizing a classroom. The two most important things to keep in mind are matching the set-up with the type of activity the students will be doing, and providing some variation so your classroom doesn't seem stagnant.

Send a photo

How do you organize your classroom? Teachers are always interested in seeing what their colleagues are doing. If you have a way of setting up your class that works for you, why not send us a photo? We'll print them in a future issue so other teachers can get some new ideas. Thank you!



Tutors, too

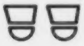
When working with just one student, the seating arrangement is also important! Here are some possibilities:

1. Side by side

Uses: Reading together; writing

Pros: The student is less distracted by your presence and can concentrate better.

Cons: Not easy to make eye contact.

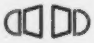


2. Facing

Uses: Interviews, conversation.

Pros: The student can see your face clearly; you can make eye contact.

Cons: May be tiring to the student if used for the whole session.

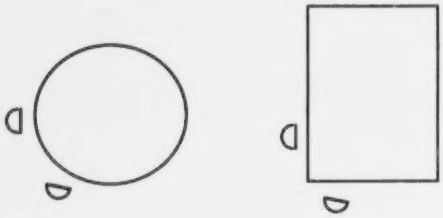


3. Diagonal

Uses: Any activity

Pros: Flexible format; can shift chair easily for reading side-by-side or for eye contact.

Cons: None that we can think of!



Reading activity:
Suicide, accident or homicide?

A mystery story

*Adapted by **Nicole Keshav**, part-time lecturer at Rutgers University in New Jersey. Some of the teaching suggestions were contributed by participants on the online network for ESL teachers, "TESL-L."*

Here are some suggestions for using the story in class:

1. Pre-teaching—Before presenting the students with the story, give them a list of vocabulary words from the text you feel they need to review beforehand.

2. Diagramming—To help make the story clear, have the students make a sketch or cartoon of the scenario as they read.

3. Sequencing—Cut the story into parts and have the students try to get the parts into the correct order. Emphasize that certain details must come before others or the story is ruined. *(Suggested by Gus Leonard.)*

4. A jigsaw activity—Each student gets a piece of information about the story on a card. For example, one person holds the information that Opus wanted to commit suicide, other students hold information about the complications (e.g. that the son had loaded the gun after being cut off financially by his mother, etc.).

The students then have some discussion about what happened and try to piece the story together from what each of them knows. They could also try to write it down. Then, the teacher gives them a copy of the story to read. *(Suggested by Martha Low)*

5. A writing exercise—Have the students try to write out the basic story line. If that's too difficult, give them some starters about each part of the story. For example, "Write something about the deceased, about the building, about the relationship between the old man and his wife, and something about the son." They can write a line or two about each one in pairs or small groups to make the writing easier to do. *(Martha Low)*

6. Alternative endings—Ask the students if they were surprised by the ending, and if so to explain why. Have them think of an alternative ending to the story (they could write this and then share the new ending with the class).

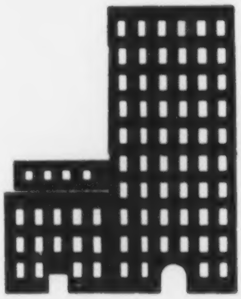
7. Grammar practice—This story provides a good opportunity to practice modal perfects (ie., wouldn't have succeeded because...or, should have been more careful...etc.) You can elicit these forms by asking questions such as: Was death a sure thing for Opus? What's your opinion about what (Opus/the old man) did? What possibilities did Opus have? How do you think (Opus/the old man) felt?

The story also provides a good opportunity to practice the simple past with the past perfect. For example: He was angry because his mother HAD CUT OFF his allowance. *(Suggested by Marilyn Martin)*

8. Discussion—Ask your students if they think the death of Opus was a suicide, accident or homicide and to explain why. How is suicide/homicide determined in other countries?

Your students might also be interested in discussing topics related to this story, such as: gun control, spousal abuse, the O.J. Simpson case, etc. *(Suggested by both Barb Dombrowski and Gus Leonard.)*

9. More stories—Ask your students if they think this story is really true, and to explain why or why not. (It's actually a "tall tale.") Ask them if they know of any other tall tales they can share with the class. ❦



Suicide, accident or homicide?

This true story was told by Dr. Don Harper Mills, President of the American Academy of Forensic Scientists.

On March 23, the medical examiner looked at the body of Ronald Opus. The examiner decided that he had died from a gunshot wound in his head. At that time police investigators thought that Opus had jumped from the top of a ten story building to commit suicide. He had left a note saying that he felt very depressed. While he was falling past the ninth floor after jumping out the window, he was killed instantly by a shotgun bullet through a window. Neither the shooter or the victim knew that a safety net had been put up at the eighth floor level to protect some window washers. Opus could NOT have committed suicide because of the safety net, but he was killed by the bullet.

Since Ronald Opus could not have committed suicide because of this safety net, the medical examiner decided that case was a homicide.

Police investigators discovered that the room on the ninth floor was occupied by an old man and his wife. They were fighting and he threatened her with a shotgun. The old man became so upset that he grabbed the gun but could not hold it straight. He was so so angry that he fired the gun at his wife, missed her, and fired out the window instead. The bullet hit Opus as he was falling down.

When a person wants to kill someone, but kills someone else instead, usually that person is guilty of the murder anyway. When the old man found out that he had killed a man falling past the window, he argued that he didn't know that the shotgun was loaded. The old man had a habit of threatening his wife with an empty gun when they argued. He said he never wanted to murder her, so this time it was an accident. The gun had been accidentally loaded.

Police investigators later found a witness who saw the old couple's son load the shotgun about six weeks before the accident. The son's mother (the old lady) had stopped giving her son money. The son knew that his father had a habit of threatening his mother with a gun. He loaded the gun with bullets and hoped that his father would shoot his mother. Now the son is the murderer of Ronald Opus.

More investigation showed that the son had become very depressed when his mother did not get killed with the shotgun after several weeks. He was so depressed about everything that he jumped out of the building from the tenth floor on March 23. He was killed by a shotgun bullet through a ninth story window.

The medical examiner decided it was a suicide.

Tools & techniques:
Class minutes

—by **Christy Hargesheimer**, *Lincoln Public Schools, Lincoln, Nebraska.*

Here's a wonderful suggestion that will help you to provide some continuity from class to class—always a challenge in adult ESL!

This activity is based on my experience as a participant of the Nebraska Writers Project. The project was to help teachers through the process of writing and peer coaching, and each of us was assigned to take notes on a particular day. The "minutes" became not so much a mere reporting of events as they were an event in and of themselves!

I suggested this activity to my ESL colleagues who tried it out and liked it.

How to do it

Explain to your students about minutes and how they are used (business meetings, organizations, etc.). Do this at the end of a class period, so you can demonstrate. Using an overhead projector or the blackboard, write several brief sentences describing what happened in class that day. Ask the students if they have any corrections or additions (you could leave something out on purpose).

Once the minutes are finished, ask the students to vote to approve or disapprove them.

Start a tradition

Now that the students understand how to do it, assign one student (or a pair of students) to take the minutes for the following session. Each day, the class can begin by having that student read the minutes for the previous day, and the class amending and approving them. If you like, you could start a book of the minutes pages as a permanent record of the class.

Choose a different student (or students) to take the minutes each day. Students who are not sure how to do it can get help by looking at a previous day's summary.

We found this technique effective because 1) it focussed class attention immediately on the business of the day, 2) it briefed students who had been absent the day before on what they had missed, and 3) students paid close attention because they had to approve the minutes or make corrections, so everybody had a role to play. Also, 4) it gave the students practice in writing sequentially, in using reported speech, summarizing and in giving an oral presentation. And finally, 5) the minutes often provided an opportunity for a mini-grammar lesson.

Follow-up

We didn't worry about following strict minutes procedures as in a real meeting. But a teacher might want to hold a mock meeting in class just to teach about parliamentary procedures.

Why it works

Approving minutes is an adult activity that gives your students a voice in what is happening. It is also a natural way to involve all your students in a group activity.

I think the idea of class minutes has a lot of potential as a language learning tool.

Cultural activity:

Famous quotations, revisited

An update

In our last issue, we published a wonderful activity by Eleanor Gard, in which students read and discussed some world-famous quotations from Western culture.

We'd like to apologize to Julius Caesar, first of all, for our horrendous Latin. Several of our astute readers with Latin training called or wrote to say that the correct quote should read: *Veni, vidi, vici* (I came, I saw, I conquered). Our version would be hard to translate but might be taken to mean something like: "I drank wine, I sat down, I tied my shoes." Amazing what a difference a few vowels can make!

International quotes

In the second part of this activity, students share famous quotes from their own cultures and explain them to the class. Eleanor sent us a list of some of the quotes her students came up with in the past, and we thought you would be interested in seeing them.

By the way, Eleanor explained to us that each class is different and that each new group of students comes up with different quotations when she does this activity with them.

"Do for your life as if you would live forever. Do for your last day as if you would die tomorrow." (Arabic) Ali ben Abytalib

"If you find yourself in a hole, stop digging." (Vietnamese) Ho Chi Minh

"The best fight is one you can avoid." (Venezuelan) Simon Bolivar

"If you work with all your might, you will get something some day." Japanese proverb

"Mathematics is the Queen of sciences." (Greek) Pythagoras

"Mathematics puts a mind in order." (Russian) Lomonosov

The Torah teaches us: "Help the needy." (Hebrew)

"Wild fire can't burn up the grass. When Spring comes, the grass will grow." (Chinese) Juyi Bei

"Work, work. My life does not get better. I watch my hand." (Japanese) Takuboku Ishi

"When people are born they have nothing. When people die, too." (Korean) Hanbi Ja

On the market

Reviews of useful ESL materials

"Reading Workout" more like fun

"Reading Workout" by Jann Huizenga and Maria Thomas-Ruzic (1994 Heinle & Heinle Publishers, 1-800-237-0053) ISBN 0-8384-3980-2. $15.

Here's a new reading text we thought you should know about. It's suitable for adults, at the high beginning/low intermediate level. There are five units on the topics of: homes, health, families, shopping and travel. Each unit includes lots of activities about the topic, including pre-reading exercises, discussion topics and interviews, plenty of vocabulary exercises, and activities designed to promote reading strategies.

Each unit also includes about six authentic readings from magazine articles, (some of them adapted for easier reading) such as "Why Women Live Longer Than Men," "Conquering Jet Lag" and "Grandma, 53, Delivers Twins." The selections are highly interesting and motivating. Some suggestions for group work and short writing assignments accompany each selection.

What we really love about this book are the student writings in it. For example, in the unit on shopping, three students were asked to comment on the question: "Are material things important to you?" Their answers are interesting and provide a wonderful starting point for discussion, or for your own students' writing.

Finally, the instructor's notes and introductory comments are both thoughtful and helpful. All of this is packed into a smallish book—166 pages—at a reasonable price. We think a teacher could have a lot of fun with this book and that students would enjoy it also.

News & notes

Support for ESL in prisons

We know that a number of our readers work with ESL students in correctional facilities, and we thought you'd be interested to hear that Ellen Polsky (an energetic ESL pro) is starting a special interest group (otherwise known as a SIG) for ESL and Bilingual Education within the international organization called the Correctional Education Association.

If you belong to the CEA, or would like to join, you can participate in Ellen's ESL section. For further information, see the notice below.

Parole help?

Is there anybody among our readers who works in a probation or parole program? Deborah Tinajero would like to talk with teachers who work in these kinds of programs. Please contact her at Pima County Adult Probation, 110 West Congress St, Tucson, AZ 85701 or call 602-740-3800. Thanks!

More info coming

Hands-on English is still planning to bring you some information about teaching ESL in a correctional setting. If you have comments or experiences to share, please let us know!

THE CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION ANNOUNCES

A SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP
IN
ESL/BILINGUAL EDUCATION

The Correctional Education Association (CEA) is an international non-profit organization dedicated to serving teachers and administrators interested in all aspects of education in correctional settings. The new English as a Second Language (ESL)/Bilingual Education Special Interest Group (SIG) of the CEA will be dedicated to the use of ESL instruction and Bilingual Education as a means of furthering the education of non-native speakers of English in jails, prisons, and detention centers all over the world. Its goals are

- to encourage professionals in the field to present papers and publish articles, and
- to promote discussion among professionals in ESL and Bilingual Education working in correctional settings.

If you are interested in participating in this SIG, you must first join CEA. Membership in CEA is $50/year for individuals, $30/year for volunteers, and $20/year for clerical and support staff

For more information, contact:

Ellen Polsky, Chair
ESL/Bilingual Education SIG, CEA
International English Center
University of Colorado
Campus Box 63
Boulder, CO 80309-0063
phone (303) 492-1165
fax (303) 492-5515
email Ellen.Polsky@Colorado.EDU

Correctional Education Association
8025 Laurel Lakes Court
Laurel, MD 20707
phone (301) 490-1440
membership inquiries (800) 783-1232
fax (301) 206-5061

Upcoming conferences

✦ November 18-20, 1994—**American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)** annual conference in Atlanta, Georgia. Call: 914-963-8830.

✦ November 24-26, 1994—**TESL Canada/TESL Ontario** joint conference in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Contact: Carol Penny, 416-593-4243.

✦ December 27-30, 1994—**Modern Language Association (MLA)** annual conference in New York, NY. Call: 212-614-6370.

✦ January 5-7, 1995—**National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)** conference in Clearwater Beach, FL. Contact: NCTE, 1111 West Kenyon Rd., Urbana, IL 61801-1096.

✦ January 19-21, 1995—**Technology, Reading & Learning Difficulties (TRLD)** annual conference in San Francisco, CA. Call: 1-800-255-2218.

✦ January 20-21, 1995—**Alabama-Mississippi TESOL** in Ocean Springs, MS. Contact: Susan Patterson, 601-374-1922.

✦ February 1-4, 1995—**California Association for Bilingual Education (CABE)** conference in Anaheim, CA. Contact: CABE, 320 West G St., Ste 203, Ontario, CA 91762.

✦ February 8-10, 1995—**Alaska Association for Bilingual Education,** in Anchorage, AK. Contact: Janice Jones Schroeder, 907-563-7787.

✦ March 28-April 1, 1995—**International TESOL annual** conference in Long Beach, CA. Call TESOL at: 703-836-0774.

Teaching award

We'd like to congratulate Karen Campbell of Syracuse, New York, for receiving the "Teacher of the Year" award from New York State TESOL this fall. We've always known she was the greatest, and now the world knows it, too!

We're proud to have Karen as a Consulting Editor for *Hands-on English*, and we often turn to her for advice. Keep up the good work, Karen!

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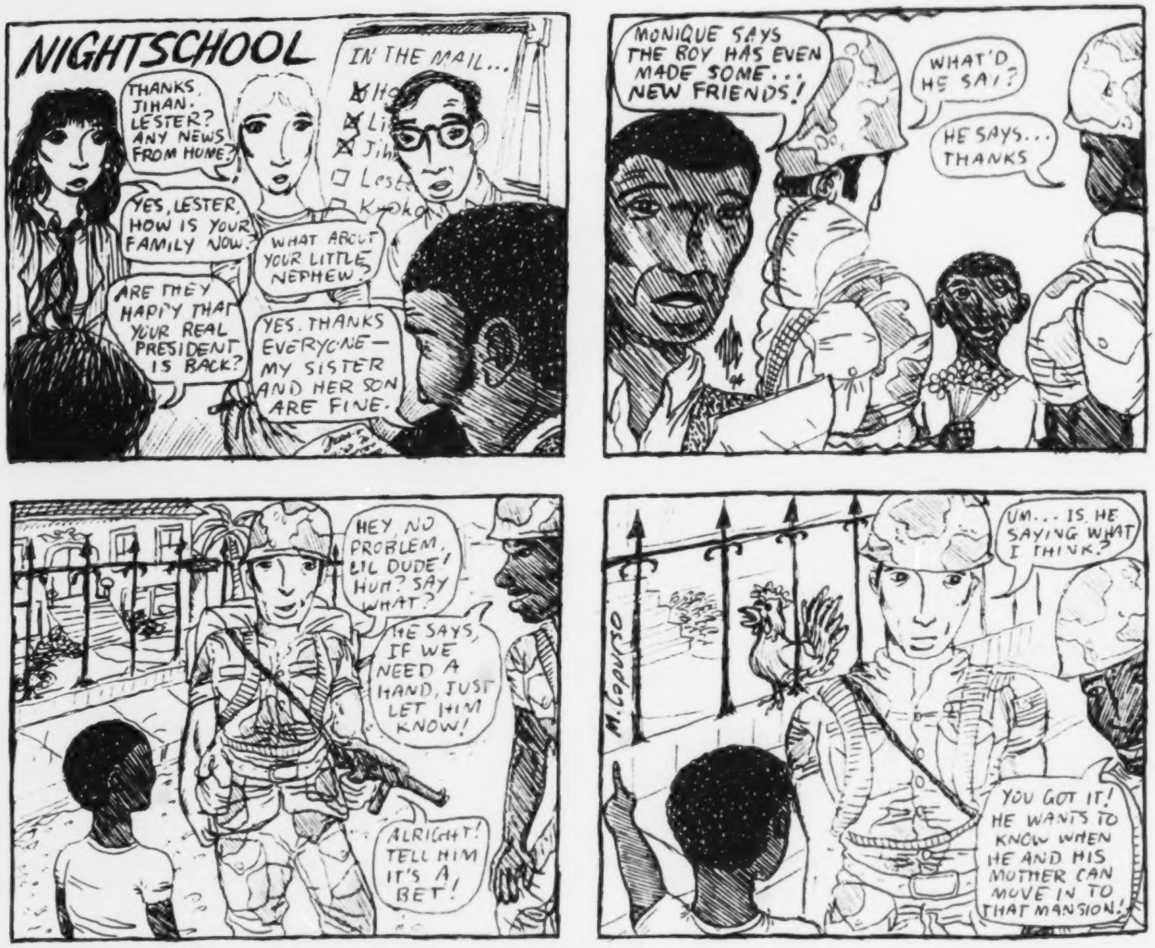
NIGHTSCHOOL
IN THE MAIL...
THANKS. JIHAN. LESTER? ANY NEWS FROM HOME?
YES, LESTER, HOW IS YOUR FAMILY NOW?
WHAT ABOUT YOUR LITTLE NEPHEW?
ARE THEY HAPPY THAT YOUR REAL PRESIDENT IS BACK?
YES. THANKS EVERYONE— MY SISTER AND HER SON ARE FINE.
MONIQUE SAYS THE BOY HAS EVEN MADE SOME... NEW FRIENDS!
WHAT'D HE SAY?
HE SAYS... THANKS
HEY, NO PROBLEM, LIL DUDE! HUH? SAY WHAT?
HE SAYS, IF WE NEED A HAND, JUST LET HIM KNOW!
ALRIGHT! TELL HIM IT'S A BET!
UM... IS HE SAYING WHAT I THINK?
YOU GOT IT! HE WANTS TO KNOW WHEN HE AND HIS MOTHER CAN MOVE IN TO THAT MANSION!

Hands-on
English
A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult ESL
P.O. Box 256
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USA

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Volume IV, Number 5 January/February 1995

Hands-on English

A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult English as a second language

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Guest editorial:

Literacy education threatened

—by Emily Hacker, ESOL Staff Development Coordinator at the Literacy Assistance Center, Inc., New York, NY. *(This article first appeared in **Literacy Update**, the LAC newsletter.)*

When I was an ESOL teacher at the BEGIN Language Program in New York City, I struggled alongside my students with the strict time limitations the welfare administration enforced on literacy education. In the past few years, I have seen the climate for welfare recipients worsen, and with it their access to literacy education.

Welfare recipients, poor immigrants (with or without documentation) and single mothers have collectively become America's primary scapegoats, apparently responsible for our economic problems, the breakdown of family values, teen pregnancy, violence and drug abuse. Consequently, they are being treated more and more like criminals, with some states, including New York, recently initiating the policy of finger-printing welfare recipients. An important figure to keep in mind in the midst of all this blaming and outrage is that welfare spending actually represents only 1% of our national budget (source: U.S. Committee on Ways and Means).

The prevailing myths about people on welfare have been translated into punitive federal, state and city policies, some of which directly affect adult literacy education. The impact on our community includes a shift of available funding from literacy education to job readiness and job referral programs. In order to remain on the list of approved programs (meaning students can receive Training Related Expenses for attending) literacy programs are going to have to meet increasing job placement rates. If programs don't meet those rates, they may lose their approved status, and with it the ability to provide training credit for their students on welfare.

Several questions come to mind. When did literacy programs become job developers? Certainly we would be overjoyed if we had the power and ability to find or create a full -time job with benefits for each of our students, let alone ourselves, but the jobs simply don't exist in our current economy. So, tell us Mr. Gingrich, where are the jobs which will enable our students, who will have even less time in literacy classes, to get off welfare *permanently*? When did the attainment of the most basic literacy skills become an end, rather than a beginning of education? How can the job placement requirements for literacy programs be increased at the same time that the number of job openings have decreased? (The prediction for New York City alone is a loss of 250,000 jobs by 1997).

I'm sure you can add a lot more questions to the list. As a community of teachers and students, we must question these policies with a loud and unified voice. We must write letters to our legislators, respond to articles in the newspapers and stories on the news and have discussions with our colleagues and students. This is an opportunity for us all to become more literate in relation to the media and public policy. Gingrich and a growing number of supporters talk blithely abut taking children away from their mothers, putting them into orphanages and denying education and health care to immigrants, all for the crime of being poor. We must not be silent.

We welcome your comments, responses and ideas on these issues.—HOE.

Hands-on English

Volume IV, Number 5
January/February 1995

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About the publication

Hands-on English is a small, independent publication that was started in 1991. The editor is a former ESL teacher who has taught ESL in many settings, including adult education programs, a refugee program, community college, and a university intensive English program. . .and survived to write about it.

Articles and ideas are contributed by experienced teachers and tutors, including our readers. If you have an article or teaching suggestion you would like to share, we welcome your input!

About the Minigrants program

Hands-on English awards a few small grants (of $100 each) annually for practical classroom projects. Applications are due April 30, and are available upon request.

Happy New Year from ***Hands-on English*** *and from your Editor, Anna Silliman! We hope you'll have a successful teaching year, and that you'll keep in touch with us. Let me know if there's anything* ***Hands-on English*** *can do for you!*

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Letters

Letter from Siberia

Margo Menconi, a reader who teaches EFL in Bratsk, Russia, wrote to tell us about some of the challenges of teaching there. First of all there are no native speakers of English available for the students to practice with, and materials, even textbooks, are hard to come by. Also, her adult students at the Siberian Humanities Academy have almost no experience in listening and speaking English. She writes:

"As is common in many places around the world, my students come to me mostly with very poor listening and speaking skills. Foreign languages are taught in the schools by the grammar-translation method largely, although some more ambitious and creative teachers are going more for communicative language teaching recently. So my students have a somewhat passive knowledge of the language—just the vocabulary and grammar."

Margo is eager for any teaching ideas that will get her students communicating in English, rather than just translating, and would be interested in hearing from other readers who teach overseas.

Visuals for the classroom

In our last issue, Christina Shaw wrote to ask for suggestions on decorating a new classroom. Here are some ideas for her:

"I'm still pretty much of a suitcase teacher, so I really envy those who stay put. If I was in one place, however, I would have a very large map with stick pins going out to a photograph of each of my students. I would also have photo essays of student activities and field trips with the essays hand-written by the students. Collages of all kinds make terrific wall decorations and can be made by the students or taken home and completed with family members. Photos of students engaged in classroom activities as well as activities in their home settings make great visuals that elicit varied conversation ideas the teacher can build on."—Diane E. Scott, Nashville, TN

This original paper-cut was made for us by Jun Kong in the People's Republic of China.

(By the way, 1995 will be the Year of the Horse in the Chinese calendar.)

Computer glitch!

We recommended a computer program for language learning called "Storyboard" in our last issue, which is available from **Athelstan Publications**. Unfortunately, we printed their old phone number—sorry about that! The new number is 800-598-3880. If you are interested in classroom technology, ask for their newsletter.

ESL software tip

"One program that we have enjoyed using at Family English School in St. Paul, Minnesota is called *MacESL*. It contains life-skills sections like "Making a Doctor's Appointment" and "Talking to the Landlord." Each of these topics contains a listening, reading and speaking exercise. In the speaking section, the student listens to the pronunciation of words (taken from the reading section) and repeats them. The computer records the student's voice. The student then listens to his or her pronunciation in comparison to that of the computer voice. Each topic also has a matching, multiple choice, cloze and crossword puzzle section. Surprisingly, you don't need a very advanced system to run the program, only a computer microphone and a minimum of a Macintosh Plus. For more information contact:

John Fleischman
Director, Media Services
Hacienda La Puerta, Adult Ed.
15377 East Proctor Ave
City of Industry, CA 91745
Phone: 818-855-7000

—Amy Votava, St. Paul, MN

New Year's greeting

"I have found your publication one of the most useful. Keep up the good work and may you have continued (and expanding) success in the New Year."

—Brigid Dawson, New York, NY

Thanks for the encouragement!—Ed.

Tools & techniques:

Making connections in the ESL classroom

—by **Joy Egbert**, Assistant Professor at Washington State University in Pullman, WA.

Lack of continuity is a big problem in adult ESL—as you know if you've been teaching in an open-enrollment environment! To compensate for uneven attendance a lot of us try to teach each class as a self-contained unit. Unfortunately this results in a "hodge-podge" of things with no integration from lesson to lesson. Here's a useful solution to the problem.

The missing link

Often it is the seemingly small things that really help non-native speakers learn English. Sometimes teachers or tutors overlook the link into a new unit or chapter, especially if the texts or materials that they are using do not make the connection.

But beginning learners especially need a constant recycling of vocabulary and ideas in order to practice concepts and vocabulary; they also need a smooth and clear transition to understand how ideas fit together in English.

Linking topics of study can also assist learners in categorizing, predicting, as well as developing and using other learning strategies. The easiest way for the educator to provide this kind of continuity is to think about how topics fit together and then provide activities that help learners move logically from one to another.

A sample lesson

Here is an example from a very beginning level class in an adult community ESL program, where the class was moving from the study of "Body Parts" to "Clothing":

1. Review body parts. The teacher gives each learner an index card with a single body part on it (e.g., "left arm"). The learners look in magazines and cut out a picture of that body part, which they then affix to a large blank poster in the front of the room.

They use their cards to label the parts. When all of the learners are finished, there should be a complete (but funny-looking!) "person" on the poster, with all of the body parts labeled. (Crosswords, Bingo, or "Teacher Says" can also be used to review body parts.)

2. Name some items of clothing. Learners look in their picture dictionaries at items of clothing. The teacher writes a body part on the board and has learners list all of the possible pieces of clothing that can cover that body part. The list might look something like this: CHEST—jacket, sweater, shirt, blouse.

The teacher does this a couple of times, and then has learners in groups write a list of clothing that covers a different body part. (They should not write the name of the body part.) Then learners in the other groups will guess which body part they are referring to.

3. Describe a person. After discussing the importance of describing people, the teacher has the learners tell her what she's wearing and where on her body she is wearing it (for example, "you have socks an shoes on your feet.") The teacher writes it on the board.

Next learners choose a partner and look closely at them for a few minutes. They then sit back to back and write or say exactly what their partner is wearing and where. The whole class can guess from the written descriptions which learner is being described and can add any items that were not mentioned.

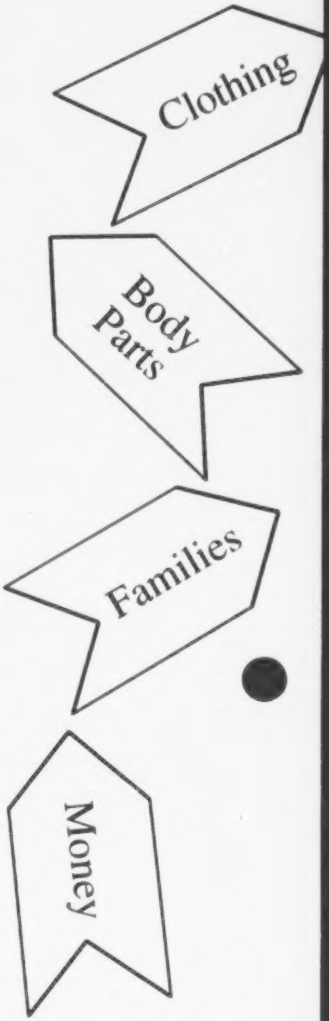
4. Continue with the study of clothing.

How to integrate

Perhaps the unit after "Clothing" deals with "Restaurant" or "Food." The teacher can make this same kind of connection by having learners talk about the types of clothing that people wear to various places. If the unit after "Clothing" is "Doctor," the teacher can use the notion of getting undressed to bring these two topics together ("First he has to take off his hat, then...")

How would you tie the following topics together? (They are taken from consecutive chapters of popular adult beginning texts. See next page for possible answers.)

1. Greetings/Computer Components
2. Families/Days of the Week
3. Food/Months of the Year
4. Names and addresses/The Train to Chicago
5. Deaf People/Plants
6. Giving and Following Directions/Safety Signs and Labels at work
7. The Supermarket/A New Home



Connections..., cont'd

Shopping
Work

There are many ways to make connections between these topics. Here are some suggestions:

1. Use e-mail or simulated e-mail to explain that written greetings are used on the computer. Practice composing messages in which a greeting is used.

2. Discuss what family members do every day (or certain days) of the week. Make a schedule.

3. Discuss what people eat during various parts of the year, including holidays. What foods are popular in the winter months and which in the summer? Put together a class calendar.

4. Make luggage tags and/or fill out a travel insurance form with name and address. Swap name and address with a new acquaintance on the train. Leave your name and address with someone (the post office, the newspaper boy) before you go on your trip.

5. Discuss that all kinds of people like plants. Learn the sign language equivalent for "plant."

6. Give fellow learners orders for how to be safe in certain work situations. Tell classmates what to do and what not to do.

7. Take the groceries home and decide which rooms they go in. Where does the soap go? The Kleenex? The avocados? Discuss what else you need to buy at the supermarket for the new home.

From the old to the new

Some of these transitions may seem a little weak, but shifting smoothly between topics and recycling/applying "old" vocabulary and concepts is vital for learners to make the connection.

Hints & tips

Create a class textbook

Here's another idea for building in more continuity in your lessons. Do you find that you give your students a lot of handouts? Of necessity most of us do, but it sometimes creates a bewildering array of papers for the students to deal with.

Get a large 3-ring notebook and label it to identify your class. For example, "Level One, First Semester" or "Refugee Program, Evening Class." Bring this notebook to each class session.

At the end of each lesson, discuss with the students what you worked on that day. Select the important handout(s) that were used. With a bold marker, put the date on the top of each sheet and insert the handout in the 3-ring binder. Then write a page number on each sheet. For example, if you already have 12 items in the folder, today's sheet will be number 13. This is your permanent record book for this class.

Keep the book available for students to look at. Students who missed a class can take a few minutes to find out what was done the day before (or make themselves a copy of the handout). Some students will want to keep their own 'official' notebook, using the handouts they received and the same numbering system as the class set.

This system will make review of past lessons much easier. Instead of leafing through piles of handouts, to find something, you can refer to its page number. For example, "The verb sheet we did last week was page 17 in our class book."

Also, if you use the "Class minutes" suggestion we printed in our last issue (Vol. IV, No. 4, ps. 12) a copy of those minutes could go into the book as well.

Grammar grab-bag:
The prepositional pitfall

—by Nancy Indelicato (Palermo, Italy) and Wendy Kilpatrick (Alexandria, VA).

Here's an activity that tutors, as well as classroom teachers, can have a lot of fun with.

A hands-on activity

Are prepositions a pitfall for your ESL students? Do you find that although your students "know" most prepositions, they have a hard time visualizing, and consequently, using them?

As we all have found, students remember best when participating in a hands-on activity. We created this exercise to help students practice and therefore remember prepositions. It can be tailored to small groups, pair work or even individual students. You can also adapt it to any level of English, and use it for either learning or reviewing prepositions. It is just as versatile as a follow-up for other grammar structures taught, such as following directions or using measurements, or even practicing sentences with "there is" and "there are" that you have already taught.

Preparation

You need some sheets of graph paper to represent a room, on which you have drawn two windows on a shorter "wall" and a door on the longer "wall," and you need an overhead projector or blackboard. Also, photos from furniture catalogs might help elicit the vocabulary for the lesson.

Introducing the lesson

Tell the students they will help you to arrange your living room furniture. Pass out the graph paper, one to each student. (Or, if students are working in pairs give one sheet for each pair.)

Begin listing prepositions on the board, then ask individuals to demonstrate the meanings. It helps to write synonyms such as next to and beside together on the board when they come up, so students can easily associate them. These prepositions are needed for this lesson:

on
on top of
in the center of, in the middle of
against
next to, beside
across from
in front of
between
in the corner

Explain the dimensions of the room and the paper, if you want to incorporate measurements into the lesson. (We used two squares of the grid to equal one foot.)

Practicing the lesson

Get the students directly involved by brainstorming with them for vocabulary of the furniture they would find in a living room. This is the time to show photos of furniture from the catalogs (or pass them around) if they can't visualize the items.

List anything they suggest on the blackboard or overhead projector. You should have a list something like this:

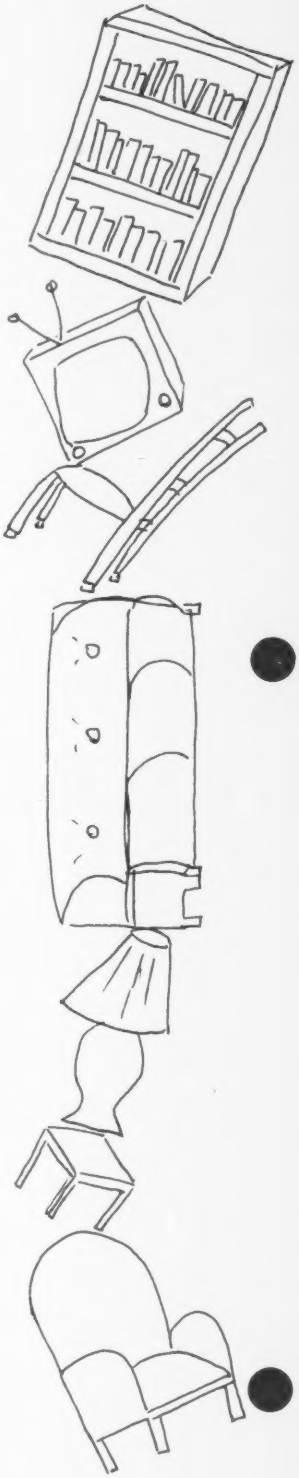
> sofa (or couch), chair, lamps, end tables, rug (or carpet), desk, armchair, footstool, coffee table, bookcase

Now the students are ready to help you arrange the furniture. Demonstrate on the board or overhead that they will be drawing rectangles or squares along the gridlines to represent the pieces of furniture. They will also write the name of each piece inside the drawing.

Then give the students directions orally which tell them where to draw, or place, the pieces of furniture. The following are some suggestions for this lesson:

1. Put the sofa against the wall across from the windows.
2. Place the bookcase against the wall between the windows.
3. Put one end table next to each end of the sofa.
4. Put the lamps on top of the end tables.
5. Place the rug in front of the sofa.
6. Put the coffee table on the rug.
7. Place the desk against the wall across from the door, and the chair in front of the desk.
8. Place the armchair in the corner between the desk and the window.
9. Put the footstool on the floor in front of the armchair.

You can continue until the room is filled with furniture, or you have used all the prepositions. We have found it more challenging to the students to give step-by-step directions—that is, so that each direction follows on something from the previous one.



If you wish to incorporate dimensions into this lesson (even more challenging!) your instructions can include the size of each item. For example, "The coffee table is 3 feet long and 1 foot wide."

Evaluating the lesson

You can check for comprehension in any of the following ways, depending on the language level of the class:

1. Ask one student to draw the room on the board as others describe it, and check their work aloud.
2. Place cut-out pieces of paper on the overhead projector as the students read their results back to you.
3. Ask members of the class or each group to write sentences which describe the room back to you. Suggest sentence patterns such as "I/we put the lamp on top of the end table," or "There is a footstool in front of the sofa."
4. Ask them for their own ideas in decorating or designing their own rooms, or to describe how the living rooms in their own countries are different from American ones.

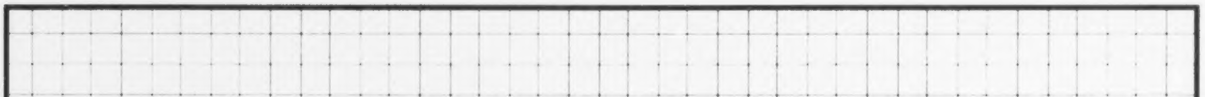
Student to student

Now give the students a chance to see how well they have learned the material.

Have the students work in pairs. Give each student a blank "room," and have one student secretly draw some furniture on it, then describe it to the other student, who tries to draw the room as described without looking at the other student's drawing. When they are finished, they can compare drawings to see how accurate they were.

Here's a blank "room" for your students to draw on as they listen to the instructions.

Scale: 2 squares=1 foot



Tools & techniques:
Blockbuster Video Lesson

by Juanita Zwaryczuk, Patchogue-Medford High School, Medford, New York.

We are pleased to share this sample video lesson with you—not only because it's a fun, high-interest grammar lesson, but because it provides you with an excellent model for designing your own video lessons, based on short segments of interest to your students.

Humor, context embedded language practice, multisensory approach, promoting cross-cultural understanding...All these elements add up to a challenging and enjoyable language lesson emphasizing a grammar point, and using video readily available at your local library or video store.

"Mr. Mom"

The following lesson plan and accompanying materials are based on a segment of the movie entitled "Mr. Mom," starring Tom Hanks. Before the lesson I preview the tape and note the counter settings for the segment where Mr. Butler begins cleaning the house up for the "clothespin scene" where he changes the baby's diaper.

Preparation

I need a VCR, monitor, the videotape and a piece of oaktag which I tape from the top of the monitor to cover the picture during part of the lesson. I also need to preview the segment several times to make a list of vocabulary the students will need, and to prepare some questions.

As written, the lesson is appropriate for low intermediate students.

The objective of this lesson is that students will be able to appropriately produce learned vocabulary pertaining to household appliances and chores. The students will also be able to form oral and written statements using the past continuous and simple past tenses, then use these statements to form sentences with "when" clauses to express a past action that interrupted a longer past continuing action. And, the students will make cultural comparisons about gender roles.

How to do it

Prepare students for the activity by explaining that the main character, Mr. Butler, is taking care of the house while his wife is at work.

1. Introduce vocabulary that you ascertain will be unfamiliar to your group using various means, such as realia, chalk drawings, etc. (Some sample vocabulary needed: bucks, exterminator, pilot light, vertical.)
2. Assist students in predicting, through examining the target words, what the segment might be about.
3. Write some focus questions on the board to direct the listening experience, such as: "How many characters are in the segment?" "How are they related to Mr. Butler?" and "What rooms of the house are shown in this segment?"
4. Students *listen* to the whole segment without seeing the picture, hearing only the sound.
5. Students work in pairs to answer the prediction questions, based on what they heard. (You may need to supply more vocabulary as needed to enable students to describe what they heard. For example: alarm, appliances, doorbell, interrupt, laundry, vacuum.)
6. Watch the segment with both picture and sound, checking the accuracy of the predictions. Discuss the likelihood of this scene taking place in the students' native countries.
7. On the board or overhead, help students generate 5 sentences to describe the action using the past continuous, then 5 sentences to describe actions that interrupted those actions using the simple past. (For example: Mr. Butler was using the washing machine. The doorbell rang.)
8. Next, model how to combine the 10 sentences using the word "when." (For example, Mr. Butler was using the washing machine when the doorbell rang.)
9. Ask a student to sum up how to express actions that interrupt continuing actions in the past.
10. Assign a crossword or other vocabulary game to reinforce the new vocabulary. (See a crossword puzzle for this segment on the next page.)
11. As a follow-up activity, read the sentences the class has created for dictation. Then have students identify the verb tenses by underlining and labeling them. This will help to review the grammar.

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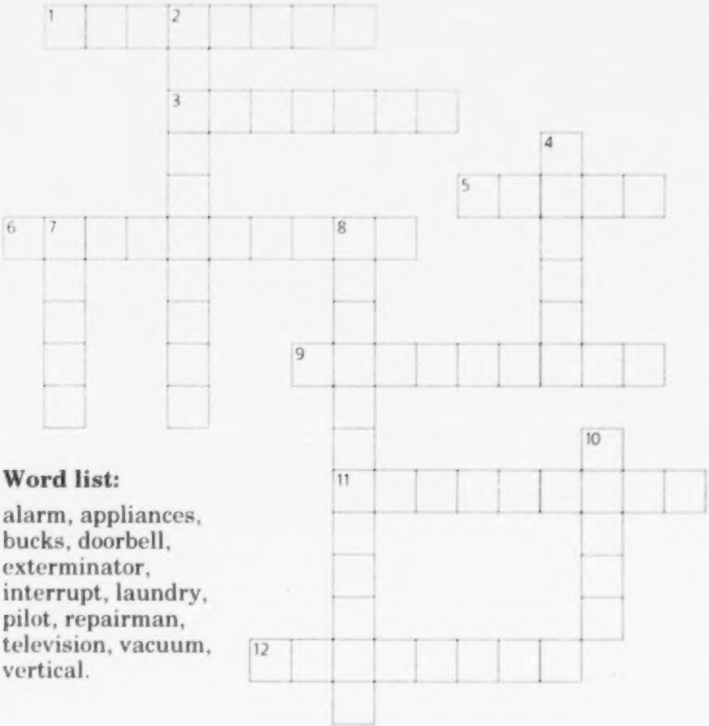
A "Mr. Mom" Crossword Puzzle



Word list:

alarm, appliances, bucks, doorbell, exterminator, interrupt, laundry, pilot, repairman, television, vacuum, vertical.

Across Clues

1. Lines from top to bottom
3. Clothes that are dirty
5. This was making noise when the smoke filled the kitchen.
6. Machines that help do the housework.
9. He came to fix the appliances.
11. To stop something from happening
12. This made noise when Mr. Butler was washing the laundry.

Down clues

2. A lady came to fix this.
4. We use this to clean the floor.
7. The first of something.
8. He came to kill the bugs.
10. A slang word for dollars.

Grammar grab-bag:

I was sleeping when the teacher came in.

Here's a little activity to help reinforce the grammar point taught in the "Mr. Mom" video lesson—a past action interrupted by a past event.

Tell your students you will leave the room for a few moments. They should each find something to do while you are gone, but STOP the activity and return to their seats when you enter the room. (If it's easier, you could write some actions cards for this, like: "Look out the window," etc.)

Leave the room, wait a few moments, then enter the room as dramatically as possible. You might announce that it's time to begin the lesson. The students should rush to their seats. Now, ask each student, "What were you doing when I came in?" (Usually students find answering this question amusing.)

When all the students have responded, have some of them repeat their answers and write these on the board for all the students to see. Ask the students to point out the grammar tenses, and discuss the "rule" that has been discovered.

Legal issues

You may be concerned about whether it is legal to show a video in the classroom, as often the warnings that accompany the video imply that it is not.

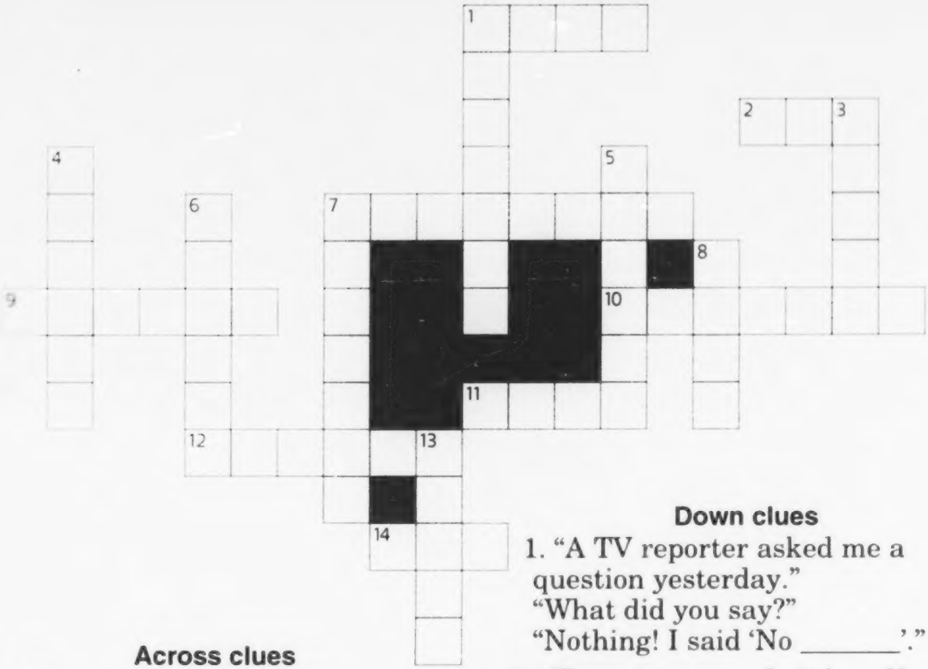
As far as we have been able to determine from information by the American Library Association, classroom use of copyrighted videotapes is legal, provided that it is part of your regular classroom teaching activities, and assuming your program is part of a non-profit organization. (The video lesson in this issue is an example of such an activity.) This is considered "fair use" of the copyrighted material.

However, showing a video for entertainment purposes, even to your students, is an infringement of copyright law. We think the spirit of this law is easy to understand—providing an 'entertainment showing' would allow people to see the material without paying for it, and that's not fair to the publisher of the material.

Check with your librarian if you need more information about using copyrighted materials.

Crossword puzzle:

Many ways to say "no!"



Word list:

busy
can't
comment
denied
down
listen
looking
not
prefer
really
refused
rejected
reject
taken
thank
way

Across clues

1. "Mom, can I watch TV?"
"No, you _____ . It's time for bed."

2. "Do you like this hat?"
"_____ really. It's a little bit too big for you."

7. My uncle wanted to come to the U.S., but immigration _______ his application, so he couldn't come.

9. I told my friend she should change jobs. But she won't _______ to me!

10. Sales clerk: "Can I help you?"
Customer: "No, thanks. I'm just ________."

11. "Would you like to go to the library with me?"
"Sorry, I'm ______ today. Maybe some other time."

12. My son is applying for college. I hope they don't _____ him!

14. "Do you want a cigarette?"
"No ______!" I quit smoking 3 months ago and I don't want to start again!"

Down clues

1. "A TV reporter asked me a question yesterday."
"What did you say?"
"Nothing! I said 'No _______'."

3. "Excuse me, can I sit here?"
"Oh, I'm sorry—this seat is already ________."

4. A man was accused of murder, but he _____ it. "I didn't do it," he said.

5. "Do you like dancing?"
"Not ________. I usually just listen to the music."

6. "Do you like country music?"
"Not really. I ________ rock and roll."

7. "What's wrong with your daughter?"
"I'm not sure. This morning she _____ to go to school."
"Oh, dear—I hope she's not getting sick."

8. "Do you know Lucia?"
"Yes."
"My brother asked her to marry him, but she turned him _____ ."

13. "Would you like another piece of cake?"
"No, ______ you, I'm full. But it was delicious!"

From the field:
A Valentines Day project

—by ***Shirley Novak**, West Side Learning Center, Syracuse, NY.*

This activity was sent to us in response to our request for holiday activities. A photo in a colorful picture-frame makes a lovely and thoughtful gift for Valentines Day (or any other occasion). Your students can have the satisfaction of making something special themselves, for little or no expense.

Give your students a copy of the instructions below, then read and discuss the instructions. If you're not planning to do this activity in class, perhaps the students would enjoy trying it at home. It is a good exercise in carefully following directions!

Also discuss with the students where the materials can be found. Perhaps the school office has some scrap cardboard. Fabric can be purchased in a fabric or craft store, in many discount stores, or even recycled from cast-off clothes.

An alternative to fabric is to use colorful gift-wrapping paper for the picture-frame. And pictures from magazines can be cut to a 3x5 size and used instead of a photo.

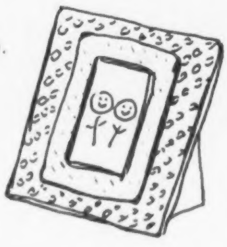
Follow-up

Discussion—talk about the tradition of quilting, and how early settlers made beautiful things from old scraps.

Writing—ask your students to write instructions on how to make something. Share these with the other students.

How to make:

Fabric-covered picture frames

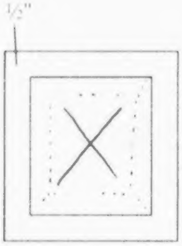


These directions are for a regular sized (3"x 5") photo.
The opening is 2¾"x 4¼"

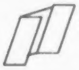
Materials needed: a photograph or picture, 3" x 5".
cardboard
print fabric (2 different kinds)
ribbon/lace (optional)
glue

Tools needed: scissors, ruler, pen (for marking fabric)

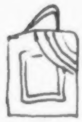
1. Measure and cut two cardboard pieces.
   For large piece = 4¾"x 6¼"
   For small piece = 3¾"x 5¼"
2. Measure and cut two print fabric pieces.
   For large cardboard = 6¼"x 7¾"
   For small cardboard = 4¾"x 6¼"
3. Glue large cardboard all over lightly and attach larger fabric piece. Glue extra fabric around to the back. (Tuck in corners carefully.)
4. Mark and cut the inside out of the small cardboard for the picture opening = 2¾"x 4¼" The small cardboard will be ½" all around.



5. Glue small fabric piece to small cardboard frame. Cut inside of fabric as shown, then fold around and glue to back.
6. Glue the *outer edge only* of small cardboard on 3 sides. Attach it to front of large cardboard. Let dry, then slip in picture.



7. To make a stand for the frame, cut a piece of cardboard 3" x 4". Fold it in thirds. Glue the middle section to the back of your picture frame. (If you prefer to hang the picture, glue a piece of ribbon at the top to hang it from.)



8. If you like, you can decorate the front of the frame with some pieces of ribbon or lace. Glue the ends of the ribbon to the back of the frame.

Now you have a personally-made gift for someone special!

Tools & techniques:
Correcting student writing

Many teachers feel that to help their students learn to write, they should give their papers back with lots of corrections. In fact, students often ask for this because they want their writing to be error-free.

Not the best way

Here at *Hands-on English* we don't think that covering your students papers with "red ink" is helpful. Here are our reasons:

1. Most of what is wrong with people's writing involves getting the meaning clear. This can't be 'fixed' by someone else, but has to be worked on by the writer.

Getting the student's meaning clear should instead involve discussion of the topic, asking questions, rewriting, reading aloud, and many other techniques that focus on what the student is trying to say. (There are a number of writing textbooks available that use these techniques, called "process writing.")

2. Many of the errors that appear in ESL students' writing are things that the students already "know" how to correct themselves. These errors, sort of like 'typos,' occur because the student was thinking about something else at the time—it's hard to concentrate on every aspect of writing at once!

When such an error is pointed out, they can fix it themselves. It's silly for the teacher to spend time doing this for the student.

3. For errors that the students do *not* know how to correct, often if they are simply told the nature of the error (for example, wrong tense), they can find out how to correct it themselves—perhaps by looking it up in a dictionary or grammar reference.

The difference between correcting somebody's error for them on the one hand, and just pointing out that an error exists and letting them correct it themselves on the other is the difference between telling and teaching. Real learning takes place when people figure out how to do things right.

A helpful tool

When your students first start writing something, the primary focus should be on the meaning, not on the errors. However, when they reach the stage where they want to "polish up" what they've written and are asking for corrections from you, here is a system of correction symbols you can use on their papers.

How to do it

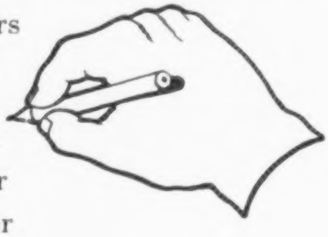
First, give each student a copy of the correction symbols (see next page) and discuss them. Then work through the sample paragraph below with the students, marking the errors together, so that the students understand what the symbols mean.

Later when you locate an error on a student paper, do not correct it, but circle it and write the appropriate code. The students can then refer to the list (which they should keep handy in a notebook) to find out what's wrong, then try to correct the error themselves.

You'll find that using this technique, students will correct most of their own errors themselves. (Note: most errors will fit into one of these categories. However, occasionally an error comes up that the student has no way of knowing how to correct—in that case it's better to just write a correction for them.)

Find the errors

There is one error in each sentence. Find the errors and mark them with the proper correction symbols.



I came to this $\overset{sp}{\text{citey}}$ about three years ago. When I first got here, I doesn't have a job. I went in school for two years. My teachers help me a lot. I studied harder to learn English. Now I have a job in the factory. My supervisor can understand my. I can talk with the other teachers at work. I am not happy.

Correction symbols

◯ sp	mistake in spelling	
◯ D	mistake in use of determiners (articles, mass/count)	(a, an,the, some, much, many)
◯ prep	mistake in use of prepositions	(on, in, to, from, of, for, *etc.*)
◯ voc	wrong word, or vocabulary item	
◯ wf	wrong word form	(*example:* quick, quickly, quicker, quickest)
◯ t	mistake in use of verb tense	(simple past, present continuous, future, *etc.*)
◯ pron	mistake in use of pronoun	I, me, he, him, she, her, it, we, they, them, us, *etc.*)
◯ agr	subject and verb do not agree	(*example:* I work/he works)
◯ ?	I don't understand what you mean.	

On the market

Reviews of useful ESL materials

"Sing it! Learn English through Song"
by Millie Grenough (1994 McGraw-Hill)
Text/workbook Levels 1-6 and Cassettes Levels 1-6. ISBN 07-024705-6 (Level One).

If you have any interest at all in in using music with your students, you'll want this series (with cassettes) for your teaching arsenal.

Suitable for high-beginning students on up, the series includes the usual traditional folk songs (Michael, Row the Boat Ashore, etc.) but also includes some show tunes (Oh, What a Beautiful Mornin'), modern folk (We Shall Overcome), popular tunes (Georgia On My Mind), and a variety of others including. love songs, contemporary songs, songs about peace and even a reggae number.

Each book in the series has about 14 songs. Each song includes a short introduction to place it in a cultural and historical context for the students—these are interesting, even for the teacher! Following the music and text of the song are some vocabulary, grammar and writing exercises. These are generally useful and provide enough material for a good session.

Because the books are sequenced according to level of difficulty, and the songs grouped according to verb tense (ie., Level One songs are present tense or future with 'going to'), you could use the series as a regular supplement to class work.

The songs wouldn't have to be taught in sequence, however. Used occasionally they would provide a nice relaxing break from regular studies. We think some of them would make an interesting lesson for a substitute teacher, for example.

Adults, college students and high school students would be likely to enjoy this material. The recordings have a clear simplicity, but are listenable and convey sophistication—they don't sound childish at all. You could have a lot of fun singing these songs with your students. But if you're not a singer yourself you can use the tape as the song 'leader.'

News & notes

Proposition 187

If you are concerned about the effects of California's Proposition 187 which was voted on this fall, you are not alone. This legislation would (when it takes effect) deny all services, including education, to illegal immigrants and their children. Teachers would be required to check on and report any unlawful students to the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS).

Recently TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages), a professional organization of 19,000 members, issued a press release voicing "grave misgivings" about the pending law. The statement points out that most ESL students in California are legal immigrants and that determining students' status is not a job teachers are equipped or trained for. Furthermore, this policy would impose "a climate of suspicion in the classroom that is antithetical to successful learning."

Other voices have been heard indicating that some service providers "will not comply" if this law is enacted. In the next few months it will be extremely interesting to see what develops in California.

Minigrants available

Once again, *Hands-on English* is making available a small number of grants for an instructional project. This year the grants will be for amounts of up to $200 each for materials, books and supplies necessary for each project.

Applications will be mailed out starting at the end of January and are due on April 30th. You are encouraged to apply—please write or call for an application form.

Your subscription renewal

We received quite a number of early renewals this fall, and some people renewed twice! Now that's enthusiasm!

When you renew, the expiration date (which appears on the upper right-hand side of your mailing label) is automatically extended.

If you have any questions about your subscription you can call us—we'll do our best to help you.

Upcoming conferences

✦ February 14-18, 1995—**National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE)** 24th annual conference in Phoenix, AZ. Call (202) 898-1829.

✦ February 15-17, 1995—**Lifelong Learning Annual Conference** in San Diego, CA. Contact: National University Research Institute, 4025 Camino del Rio South, San Diego, CA 92108.

✦ February 23-24, 1995—**First International Conference on Women and Literacy,** sponsored by the Georgia State U. Center for the Study of Adult Literacy. Contact the Center at GSU, University Plaza, Atlanta, GA 30303-3083. Tel: (404) 651-2405.

✦ March 3-4, 1995—**Kansas TESOL** in Topeka, KS. Contact Mary Lou Haag, (913) 532-7324.

✦ March 9-11, 1995—**Association of British Columbia TEAL**, Canada. Contact TEAL at (604) 294-8325.

✦ March 10-11, 1995—**Illinois TESOL-BE** in Chicago, IL. Contact Virginia Gibbons, (708) 635-1628.

✦ March 28-April 1, 1995—**Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)** 29th annual convention in Long Beach, CA. Call: (703) 836-0774.

✦ April 8, 1995—**Northern New England TESOL** in Portland, ME. Contact Bart Weyand, (207) 780-4419.

✦ April 23-25, 1995—**National Center for Family Literacy** in Louisville, KY. Call: (502) 584-1133.

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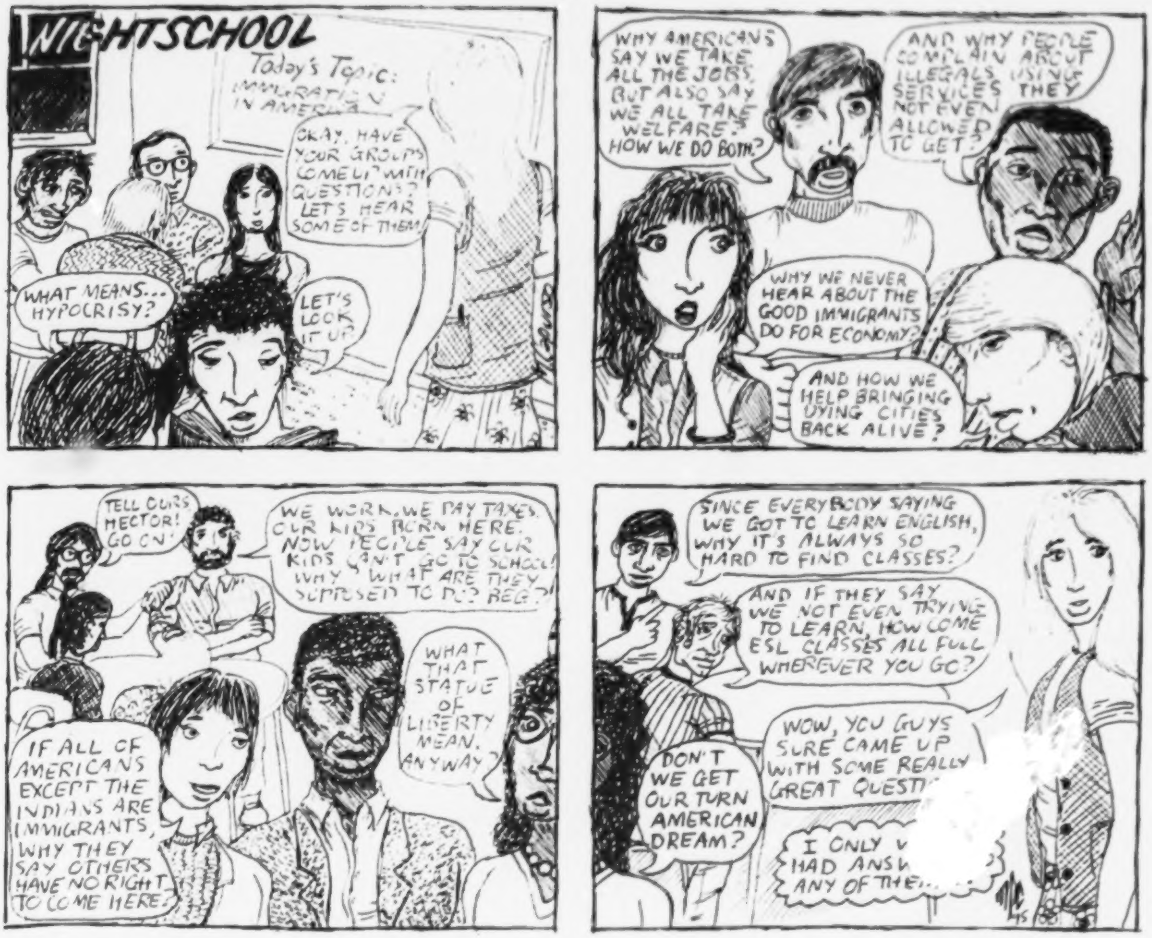
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LET'S LOOK IT UP
WHY AMERICANS SAY WE TAKE ALL THE JOBS, BUT ALSO SAY WE ALL TAKE WELFARE? HOW WE DO BOTH?
AND WHY PEOPLE COMPLAIN ABOUT ILLEGALS USING SERVICES THEY NOT EVEN ALLOWED TO GET?
WHY WE NEVER HEAR ABOUT THE GOOD IMMIGRANTS DO FOR ECONOMY?
AND HOW WE HELP BRINGING DYING CITIES BACK ALIVE?
TELL OURS HECTOR! GO ON'
WE WORK, WE PAY TAXES. OUR KIDS BORN HERE. NOW PEOPLE SAY OUR KIDS CAN'T GO TO SCHOOL! WHY? WHAT ARE THEY SUPPOSED TO DO? BEG?
WHAT THAT STATUE OF LIBERTY MEAN, ANYWAY?
IF ALL OF AMERICANS EXCEPT THE INDIANS ARE IMMIGRANTS, WHY THEY SAY OTHERS HAVE NO RIGHT TO COME HERE?
SINCE EVERYBODY SAYING WE GOT TO LEARN ENGLISH, WHY IT'S ALWAYS SO HARD TO FIND CLASSES?
AND IF THEY SAY WE NOT EVEN TRYING TO LEARN, HOW COME ESL CLASSES ALL FULL WHEREVER YOU GO?
DON'T WE GET OUR TURN AMERICAN DREAM?
WOW, YOU GUYS SURE CAME UP WITH SOME REALLY GREAT QUESTI
I ONLY W HAD ANSW ANY OF THE
MC '95

Hands-on English

A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult ESL
P.O. Box 256
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January/February issue

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Volume IV, No. 6 March/April 1995

Hands-on English

A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult English as a second language

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Special insert:
Adult education action alert

Editorial:

Planting trees as metaphor for teaching and social change

When we moved to our treeless Nebraska hilltop we saw the need for some trees. Driving to our local nursery to buy some, we saw this ominous sign over the door: "THE BEST TIME TO PLANT A TREE WAS 10 YEARS AGO—THE SECOND BEST TIME IS NOW!"

Our heart sank, because in reality it will be 10 years or so before the little trees we're nurturing will provide us with windbreak and shade. (And we'll be so *old* by then!) Nonetheless we get out the shovels every spring and fall and work as hard as we can to get some trees in.

You might laugh to see our long rows of ankle-high seedlings waving in the wind, but hey—you gotta start somewhere.

It's hard to think long term. Everybody likes to see fast results for their work. It occurs to us, though, that that's what we're all doing in adult education—thinking long term. Sometimes we don't see the results of our work right away. The real benefits for the students, in some cases, will come years later. In fact, often the greatest benefit in adult education comes in the next generation, in the children who learned from their parents' example.

We met a real-life demonstration of this effect at a dinner party recently. A young woman in her second year of medical school was telling us of her studying strategies for preparing for her medical exams. She was clearly determined and motivated to succeed.

As we talked with her some more, we learned that her mother, divorced with 6 children, had been on welfare and lived "in the projects" in Louisiana. She went to evening school to get a GED, went on for training and eventually a job which supported the family. Her daughter told us that it was her mother's example of getting an education against all odds that taught her how to succeed.

Of mixed Native American heritage, our acquaintance's tuition is being paid for in part by a service contract with her people, which she will repay after medical school by working on a reservation for a few years. Currently there are only about a hundred Native American doctors, so her success is important in a number of ways.

If her mother's GED teachers were still around, we would love to tell them this wonderful story. When they helped one welfare mother to succeed, did they realize what tremendous effects this would have? Did they have any idea how many lives they were affecting? If they knew about this now, we're sure they would die happy!

Right now, as you may know, adult education funding is threatened by cuts and eliminations in Congress. For a short term savings, we're about to lose our best tools for long-term success.

Do you think we should stop planting seedlings because they cost too much? Because a lot of them die and have to be planted again? Of course not—not if you care about the future. We hope you will do a few things if you agree with us:

- Be proud of your work—you have an important influence on people's lives.
- Write to your legislators to object to cuts in education funding (see our special insert in this issue).
- Get involved in whatever professional organizations are available to you, and plan to stay involved for the next 10 years until we see results.
- Plant a tree on National Arbor Day this April. (To join the National Arbor Day Foundation or to ask about their educational programs, write to: 100 Arbor Avenue, Nebraska City, NE 68410. They need your help, too!)

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Hands-on English

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March/April 1995

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About the publication

Hands-on English is a small, independent publication that was started in 1991. The editor is a former ESL teacher who has taught ESL in many settings, including adult education programs, a refugee program, community college, and a university intensive English program. . .and survived to write about it!

Articles and ideas are contributed by experienced teachers and tutors, including our readers. If you have an article or teaching suggestion you would like to share, we welcome your input!

About the Minigrants program

Hands-on English awards a few small grants (of $100 each) annually for practical classroom projects. Applications are due April 30, and are available upon request.

Hands-on
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(The editor, speaking nicely to her computer.)

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IV6

Letters

Preparing students for work

This letter is in response to our guest editorial, "Literacy Education Threatened" in the Jan/Feb issue.

"...I also am saddened and dismayed by the political climate which is turning on immigrants, refugees and poor Americans. However, instead of joining the negative voices, I strive to find some positive action where I can contribute to solving these additional problems that we, in the ESL profession, are burdened with.

Over the last 10 years, I have attempted to integrate as much VESL (Vocational ESL) content material as possible in my classes...I believe we need to share what materials there are on VESL, develop strong networks, and improve materials and methods in order to demonstrate that we are preparing ESL students for work and to become contributing, productive Americans—perhaps this is the best message we can convey. Any other ideas out there?"

Joyce Grane, Tulsa, OK

Tips for Russian students

"Here is my response to the 'Letter from Siberia' by Margo Menconi (Jan/Feb issues):

I am Russian myself and I was taught English at the Russian University in the way described in the letter. The grammar-translation method was used largely, but I also took a course of conversational English. All my teachers were Russians and they taught classical British English with a Russian accent. So, my English experience was pretty similar to your students'. After I moved to the United States as an immigrant three years ago, I chose teaching ESL as a career.

I believe that my practical suggestions, based both on my experience as an ESL student and as an ESL teacher, as well as on my knowledge of the Russian learning audience, will help you choose the appropriate strategies to get your students communicating in English.

1) You wrote that your students had a somewhat passive knowledge of the language—just the vocabulary and grammar. This is a plus! Your students have a good base to build on.

2) Because of the difference in commonly used teaching/learning strategies in Russian and American schools, your students are probably not very enthusiastic about working in pairs. They have become accustomed to the teacher as a partner. Therefore, teacher-student and student-student interaction in front of the class is absolutely appropriate in this culture. Don't be afraid to spotlight the student. Most of them will feel comfortable with this situation.

(The letter includes 10 teaching suggestions, too long to include here, sorry! Briefly they are: Have students prepare oral reports, go with the group to the theater, bring in family pictures to discuss, organize 'press conferences,' discuss politics and history and cultural differences, use short passages on tape for listening comprehension, sing with the students, give a lesson on American history, use role-plays.)

I believe that if you use some of these tips you will soon find your group speaking willingly and enthusiastically. Doing these activities may benefit not only your students in terms of their progress—you also will learn more about Russian people and their culture. Good luck to you!

Sincerely,

Raissa Krivitsky, ESL Coordinator
Literacy Volunteers of Thomkins County
Ithaca, New York

We missed by one species

Yvonne Leong of the Central Orange County Literacy Council in Santa Ana, California, was kind enough to write to tell us that 1995 (the lunar new year 4693) is the Year of the BOAR for the Chinese and many Asians. Not, as we reported, the year of the Horse. (Well, they look similar, don't they?) Happy New Year!

Posters for the classroom

A few issues ago, a reader was looking for a good source for classroom posters. From Dallas Purdy in Lockhart, Texas, we found out about a company that sells posters that are not expensive. We haven't seen these, but Dallas says they are "wonderful." For a free catalog, call **Dale Seymour Publications,** 1-800-872-1100.

Puzzle:

Many ways to say "yes"

First, fill in the blanks to find the missing words. Then, search for each word in the puzzle. When you find a word, put a circle around it.

1. Duong: "Can you help me fix my car?"

   Fred: "Sure, I'll be ________ to. What time?"

2. Susanna: "I think Congress should pass a health care bill."

   Jorge: I _____ with you! We need better health care in this country."

3. At a wedding: Question: "Do you take this man to be your lawfully wedded husband?"

   Answer: "I ______."

4. When they mean "no," people sometimes shake their head from left to right. When they mean "yes," they ______ their head up and down.

5. Student: "Can I go to the bathroom, please?"

   Teacher: "Of ______. You don't have to ask.

6. Student A: "Are you a new student?"

   Student B: "______ , today is my first day."

7. Child: "Can I go outside and play?"

   Parent: "No, it's getting late."

   Child: "Please?"

   Parent: "Oh, all _____, but only for half an hour."

8. Friend A: "Would you like to visit my home on Saturday?"

   Friend B: "Sure, why _____? That sounds like fun."

9. Lucie: "Can you come to a birthday party tonight?"

   Mary: "I'd ______ to! Can I bring my kids?"

10. Friend A: "My tooth hurts."

    Friend B: "Maybe you should see a dentist."

    Friend A: "I'm ______ you are right, but I don't like going to the dentist!"

Easy puzzle

```
Q L H J Z C H E L V S U R E Q H
D O P H Z L G N M B E M L R C I
B K V D N O T G Q N K A U E R T
V S S V K G W H U R Y E S V Z L
O U D U O K D Y V N O D D T J Q
G A G R E E K E R R A S O T S V
R L J I W Y T O H F H R I G H T
K E B C O U R S E G H Z V D Q U
O H A P P Y L W L Y K R K F H V
R B M K F H N E E K L O V E V X
```

Harder puzzle

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C X A H L E R U S C N L C
C L Q E J Q F W L Y Q J W
X R O V X C M V T F T Q Y
L L M O B S K H T C M X G
D L K L N E G V L Y M E H
Q B N G L I B L O N L R W
R C K G R H Q I Y E S S X
U O Y H N D K O X S R K U
F U Q Q J S Y V P L E Z K
Z R Z Q D C Y T W I A E I
Q S D B F G A M I X J U W
G E O Y K L W T I N U N H
U C N J S Z A M M W P T R
B U Q S C Z G C N X E O L
Y N X S Z H R P W L M N C
P N V I W I E T H O I R O
P W C I F Y E W P R X W D
A C Z V X G T E J C B X Z
H R E B A K P P D O E D S
```

Abbreviations: Streets, roads & avenues

Students need to know about these abbreviations not only so they can address a letter correctly, but also so they can interpret information they find in the newspaper and phone book.

How to do it

First, ask students if they can think of some different words for "street" and write these on the board. Students who have lived here for a while may be able to think of quite a few.

Next, hand out List A below and discuss what each of the words mean (many of them are different words for street.) When the students are familiar with these words, had out List B and have them try to match the addresses with the correct abbreviations. Check the answers together.

Dictation

To practice using the abbreviations, dictate some addresses to see if the students can write them correctly. Use simple or familiar names for streets. For example, you say: "Two hundred Pine Street." They write: "200 Pine St."

If you have a list of "addresses" ready, this dictation exercise would make a nice pair-work activity as well.

Homework?

As a homework activity, students could search for examples of these abbreviations in the newspaper and bring them in to class.

Matching Exercise

List A	List B
Apartment	Apt.
Circle	Ave.
Lane	Blvd.
Boulevard	Ctr.
Route	Cir.
Parkway	Cresc.
Place	Dr.
Avenue	Hwy.
Center	Ln.
Park	Pk.
Crescent	Pkwy.
Turnpike	Pl.
Post Office Box	Rd.
Drive	Rte.
Rural Route	St.
Road	Trlr.
Street	Tpk.
Trailer	R.R.
Highway	P.O.B.

Many thanks to **Sal Parlato**, for giving us permission to reprint this abbreviations matching exercise. The material originally appeared in his book: *America from "A" to "Z"—An alphabetical introduction to the U.S. and the English Language* (published 1989 by American English Publications, 356 Dongan Hills Ave, Staten Island, NY 10305 (Tel: 718-667-6637).

Cultural activity:

Remembering Mother's Day

*—by **Sue Sager**, ESL Instructor at Rogue Community College, Adult Learning Center in Medford, Oregon.*

Readers have asked us for more holiday-specific activities. This one gives student's practice in vocabulary, speaking, listening and writing.

I did this activity with my beginning ESL students, about 20 of them, all but three from Mexico. Mother's Day in Mexico is always on May 10 (in the U.S. it's on the second Sunday in May). Our three Chinese students also participated in a discussion of Mother's Day.

Vocab review

We had been reviewing family members—mother, father, cousin, etc., so I began with a BINGO game. Starting with a blank BINGO card, students wrote names of family members in the squares. As I called out the various names, students crossed off the ones that matched. Soon "BINGO's" were being shouted out and were acknowledged, but the students continued playing until their entire grids were crossed out.

Sharing stories

Then I asked the students to tell us about their mothers. I began by telling them that my mother had died last summer and what I remembered about her. This opened the discussion, and many students responded with strong feelings about their mothers. Several students had also lost their mothers, and of course many had mothers living in Mexico or China.

Writing

I wrote some sentences on the board as they spoke, as well as vocabulary words which were appropriate. After the discussion I encouraged them to write about their mothers. About half the students were able to do this independently, with help on certain words or phrases. Those who couldn't, copied the sentences from the board.

For some of the students who were unable to write, I talked with them individually about their mothers, and wrote a few sentences as they dictated them to me. Then they read the sentences back to me, so I was sure they knew what was on the paper.

Reading stories

After they had written their stories, many of the students read them aloud to the class. Some of the men were especially proud to read what they had written. They had come up with some beautiful sentiments abut their mothers.

Making a card

As a follow-up, I provided construction paper, markers, etc. for those who wished to make Mother's Day cards and send their stories to their mothers.

Mother's
Day

Discussion ideas

Do you have Mother's Day in your country? If yes, how is it celebrated there?

What other special days do you celebrate in your country?

Make a holiday chart

We have three kinds of holidays. They are:

1. religious holidays
2. national holidays
3. folk, or traditional, holidays.

On a large piece of paper, or on the blackboard, write these three categories across the top.

What kind of holiday is Mother's Day? Write "Mother's Day" in the correct column.

Now name another holiday, and then decide what kind of holiday it is. Write the name of this holiday on the chart, under the correct category. Continue naming as many holidays as you can, and put them on the chart.

A reading activity:

The Thief's Mistake

*—by **Jane Hervieux**. The author is an ESL teacher in Pensacola, Florida. She likes to write stories for her students, so they can practice vocabulary and reading. We hope you enjoy this one!*

In London, a petty thief saw a briefcase sitting alone in a train station. The briefcase's owner was not there. The thief thought, "I'll steal that briefcase. Maybe it has something valuable inside." So he walked toward the briefcase. Then he looked around. He didn't see anybody, so he picked up the briefcase and walked away.

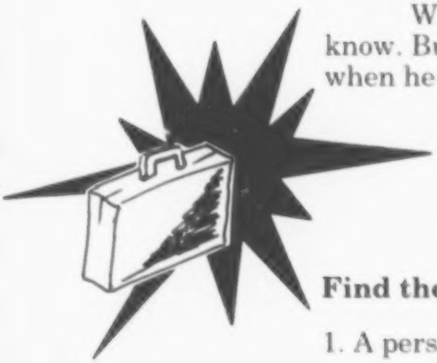
He got on a train. He sat on the seat with the briefcase beside him. Then he heard a noise. The noise was coming from the briefcase. The noise was like a clock ticking.

The thief thought, "Is there a bomb inside that briefcase?" The thief was frightened. When the train stopped, the thief put the briefcase outside the train. Then he rode to the next stop and called the police.

He told the police where the briefcase was. He did not tell the police his name or where he was. The police found the briefcase. The bomb experts opened the briefcase. Yes, there was a bomb. The experts defused the bomb, so it did not explode.

The thief was lucky because the briefcase didn't explode. Maybe the thief saved somebody's life.

Who made the bomb? Who was the target? We don't know. But we do know that the thief made a big mistake when he took that briefcase.



Find these words

1. A person who steals something is called a ________________.

2. Something that is worth a lot of money is a ________________ item.

3. Another word for "take something " is "______________ something up."

4. The sound a clock makes is called "______________."

5. Another word for "afraid" is ____________________.

6. A bomb can kill people if it __________________.

Minigrants award winner:

Consumer Economics Project

—by **Marilyn Kwitkin**, *Adult Basic Education program at Nassau Tech, in Carle Place, New York.*

We were amazed at the number and variety of activities that Marilyn was able to work into this project! The adult tone of the work comes from the product recommendations that the students make as a result of their food research.

Life skills important

My ESL class is located on Long Island, in the southeastern part of New York state. It consists of about 25 students, 80% women and 20% men. The students are mostly from Latin America, with five Asian women. The students range in age from 21 to 50, with the majority in their twenties and thirties. The program has a life skills approach to ESL as its focus. Because the program has continuous enrollment, attendance is always a concern. Any number of life situations can occur that interfere with student attendance: new students enter at any time, employers change work schedules, parents have children who get sick, etc.

The program strives to give its students the skills necessary to survive in our society. To this end, I chose a supermarket shopping evaluation project for my students. I hoped that the students would learn about unit pricing, product packaging language and about making informed decisions, as well as developing their communicative skills by working in groups.

Choosing products

I had trouble at first getting students to think of a product to evaluate, so I did a brainstorming activity listing about 25 possible supermarket items. We then did a weighted vote, agreeing that the top four items would be the ones that we would examine. The items voted for were: bread, cookies, milk and cheese. Students then formed groups according to their interest. Luckily, the students fell into four groups of about equal size.

Looking at features

After the students were in their groups, they had to identify the significant features (such as taste, nutrition and price) for their product. I tried to stress that only like items could be accurately compared. That is, chocolate cookies could not be compared to oatmeal cookies. Two different brands of chocolate cookies or two different brands of oatmeal cookies are the only equal comparisons. The students then used the *Hands-on English* grant to purchase several brands of each product chosen.

Apple Juice Summary

We made a group and went to the supermarket. We bought different kinds of apple juice. Also we compared the nutritional label and prices. We tasted them in the classroom. We recommend the Motts (Natural Apple Juice)—it was nutritional and tasted better.

Elizabeth Lopez
Afternoon class

Taste-testing

After purchasing the food items, students examined, tasted and made recommendations of the best brand, according to the features previously identified. In many cases, however, the recommendations did not follow the features the students had originally proposed. They got sidetracked by the ingredients they found. I tried not to get too involved in directing them when this occurred, preferring that they discover for themselves that sometimes it is better to keep things simple and not bring in too many features for consideration because things get confusing.

These lucky students got the cookie assignment!

Special insert, March 1995

Special insert: Action alert!

Hands-on English

A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult English as a second language

Extra!

Adult education and literacy funding is under serious attack in the U.S.Congress. Because adult educators are a small and not very powerful group, it is important for all of us to make our voices heard—now, and over the next few months as policy decisions are reached in Washington.

For this reason, ***Hands-on English*** *is enclosing this special insert, which we hope will help inform you about what is going on, and move you to take action.*

The material in this special insert is not copyrighted. Please feel free to duplicate it, reprint it or distribute it to colleagues.

Thank you!

Time for action:

Call your legislators—I did!

I have been waiting anxiously for somebody to DO something or tell us how to get started speaking out against the funding cuts to adult education. When I saw a message online by Silja Kallenbach about how she called up her Congressman, I thought, "Hey—I can do that!" So I did, and found it was easy. Maybe others can benefit from my LONG experience (of one day!) of political lobbying.

I first called my Congressman's office (Doug Bereuter, Republican from Nebraska) and asked to speak with a staffer who could tell me something about the adult education cuts. I was then connected with a very nice young woman who was willing to speak with me at length. She was informed about the issue, and said that as far as she knew, the cuts had been approved in committee and would likely come to the House floor around mid-March. She carefully explained to me (although I already knew) how the proposals would next go to the Senate Appropriations Committee, then the full Senate, then to a conference committee, then back to the House.

I told the staffer I wanted the Congressman to know how concerned I was about cutting education, particularly in a time when we're asking people to be more self-sufficient! She listened sympathetically, but when I told her how disastrous these cuts will be for Nebraska (all our adult ed funding is federal) she started taking notes and wrote down my name and address. She assured me she would pass along my comments to the Congressman.

After I hung up, though, I wished I had asked her specifically how the Congressman was planning to vote. Darn! Well, maybe I'll call her back next week.

Next I called Senator Bob Kerrey's office (Democrat from Nebraska). Since he's on the Appropriations Committee, his opinion is especially important. Again, I asked to speak with a staffer who could tell me about the adult ed cuts. I was told to call back after lunch and talk to Patty.

Well, I was tickled pink when I later reached Patty that rather than listen to ME, she started telling me HERSELF how important adult education is in people's lives! She assured me that Senator Kerrey feels strongly about this—in fact he would favor FURTHER funding for education. What a guy!

She was so friendly that I ventured to tell her my concerns about English as a Second Language as well. When I mentioned that I edit a newsletter for ESL she said immediately, "Send us a copy." Gosh—really? I found myself offering any help that I could and she took down my name and address. I hung up, feeling I'd established a relationship.

I hope that you will call your legislators too, and right away. When you do, try to reach a staffer who knows something about the issue rather than just talking with the person who answers the phones. Have a question ready, like "When will the adult ed cuts be taken up on the floor?" that will get the conversation started. Be sure to tell them, if you can, how these cuts will affect people in YOUR state—this is the crucial issue for them.

And finally, remember—they really do want to hear from you, even if they don't agree with your views. Good luck! And let us know how it goes.

—Anna Silliman, Editor

What can we do?

—Some examples from around the country

As much as possible, we have tried to find out what kinds of action people are taking on behalf of adult education, so that we could report to you about it. Perhaps these examples will give you some ideas on how ***you*** *can participate.*

1. Letter-writing campaigns.

Many organizations, including the State Directors of Adult Education, the National Coalition for Literacy and TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) have urged their members to start contacting legislators about the proposed cuts.

In some places, people are organizing so that their calls and letters arrive around the same day, with the theory that they will bring greater attention that way. In any case, remember: "The only letter that has no impact is the one that isn't written."

2. Phone calls to legislators.

Sometimes by calling instead of writing, you can discover more about what your legislator is thinking, and get answers to questions (see our example on the front page of this insert).

One teacher who called her Congressman was amazed to find that he didn't know about the cuts! Her call brought this to the attention of his staff.

3. Letter-writing campaigns by students.

In many programs students have organized letters to their federal legislators, explaining how important adult education is to them. In one program in Dover, New Hampshire, students and staff mobilized to help restore local funding to their program, by writing letters to the editor of the local newspaper, making calls and speaking at meetings.

4. Celebrating and recognizing successful students.

Any media attention that you can get for your program and students can also be forwarded to legislators. Or, how about some anecdotes about former students, and what they are doing now?

In three states (Washington, Oregon and Ohio), TESOL affiliates have successfully launched a state-wide "ESL/Bilingual Awareness Week" that involved a lot of fun activities and some good, positive publicity.

5. Getting to know legislators.

We have heard of a number of programs where legislators were invited to visit classes and talk with teachers and students. The Massachusetts Coalition for Adult Education, for example, started a program called "the Meet and Greet Campaign" which was an ongoing effort to get legislators to visit programs and get to know the people there.

6. Informing immigrant groups about lobbying.

Not only current students, but also former students and successful immigrants can have a lot to say about the need for adult education. We heard about an Asian community-based group in Philadelphia, PA, which organized a training session to help their members understand and advocate against cuts in welfare, Medicaid, financial aid for higher education, and other services. Their aim was to promote greater community involvement.

7. Public speaking

At hearings that were held around the country by the Department of Education, many people got a chance to speak up on behalf of adult programs.

Locally, there may be plenty of opportunities to let people know what's going on by speaking to community groups, church groups, etc. The message can be just a simple statement of two or three sentences.

8. Networking with other professionals.

We have been isolated, physically and intellectually separated from each other and from others serving our students. If anything good comes of all this, it will be that we have established some communication and some common goals.

For example, a coalition of groups is about to issue a set of core standards for adult education which we can all agree on—this will make articulating what we are fighting for a little easier.

9. Becoming political.

Some individuals are turning their attention to what's going on in Washington—reading the Federal Register and learning the jargon. This may not be everyone's cup of tea, but as a field we need to do this in order to participate in the national discussion.

What's happening?

—A quick description of our problem

Two things are happening at this time in Washington that are important to us and our students.

Happening right now

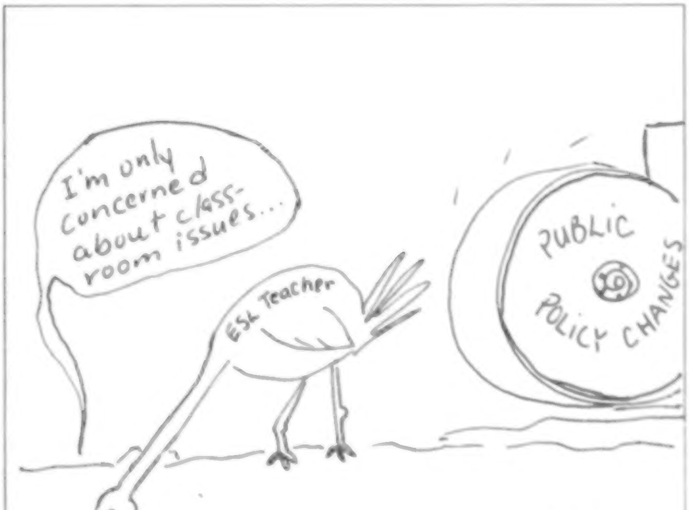
First of all, cuts and program eliminations of $54 million are being proposed in the House for adult education right now, for *this fiscal year* (1995). This kind of cut is called a "rescission" (as in scissors) because the legislators are rescinding funds that were already allocated.

Once these proposals are voted on in the House (probably in mid-March), they will be sent to the Senate for discussion and approval. If approved, these cuts will affect not only ABE (including ESL), but State Literacy Resource Centers, Workplace Literacy, Literacy for the Homeless, for Incarcarated Adults, and Library Literacy will be eliminated.

Happening soon

Second, discussion of what will happen to adult education for the next fiscal year (1996) is already beginning. Two steps are involved here: the reauthorization of the Adult Education Act, which is the law that requires the government to provide adult education, and then allocating the funds for it.

It is feared, by all in the adult education and literacy community, that we will see even more drastic cuts at this second stage. In fact, it is even feared that adult education might be lumped together with job training programs. This would have the effect of making short-term employment outcomes the main goal, instead of the long-term goals of basic education which provide the student with developmental skills.


I'm only concerned about class-room issues...
ESL Teacher
PUBLIC POLICY CHANGES

Where to go for more info

If you need more information about how to take action, you can contact your nearest Adult Education Program. They will have received some action materials from the State Director, and can probably give you some idea of the strategy that is being taken in your state, and what the local issues are.

To get information about your legislators, you can call your local League of Women Voters (look in the phone book to see if there is one in your city). They give out non-partisan information to everybody about legislative issues.

To connect with fellow ESL teachers join TESOL or a regional TESOL affiliate. They will help you keep up-to-date through newsletters and conferences.

Also if you can get online you can join TESLIT-L, an Internet discussion "list" for adult ESL teachers.

In a nutshell:

"Congress is considering reducing funding previously granted specific programs and passing the remainder on to the states to disburse according to local priorities.

"Many policy makers in adult education are concerned that eliminating programs in July will lead to massive staffing cuts, loss of program continuity, and loss of important initiatives in literacy education. They are concerned that job training will take precedence over literacy education and workforce programs will take precedence over services to families, the prison population, and research & staff development.

"Adult educators are now mobilizing in all fifty states to make the case for Federal adult literacy funding. Failing that, adult educators must learn how to promote programs to state and local government officials. Many of us...are not accustomed to participate in political action."

—Judy Snoke
Director, Virginia Tech Language Institute
(from an online discussion, TESLIT-L)

Take action
now on behalf of
our students;
if you don't,
no one else will!

For their help as we were gathering information about funding issues, ***Hands-on English*** *is extremely grateful to the following people:*

Jinx Crouch, Silja Kallenbach, Terry O'Donnell, Sandy Rosenboom, Judith Snoke, Paula Schlusberg.

Learn more about funding

Where does yours come from?

The cost to run your program is the sum of your current funding and your in-kind support.

Many of us who are busy with teaching don't even know where our current program funding comes from! We need to get some facts! Use this list of questions as a "worksheet" to find out more.

1. What are the sources of funding for your program? (Get exact names of agencies, grants, etc.)
2. How much money does your program receive from each of these sources?
3. Where does this funding come from? (federal, state, local, private, or a combination?)
4. Who (or what agency) decides if you get this money?
5. Who (or what agency) decides how you can spend it? (names of persons, agencies, legislators, administrators, etc.)
6. What in-kind donations does your program receive? (i.e., use of space, services, materials, tutoring, donated time) Can you estimate the dollar value of this?

The total of #2 and #6 is the cost to run your program.

Once you have worked through this information, you can better understand the effects of funding changes. For your own information, try to answer these questions:

7. How is the program money spent? (If possible, see the budget.)
8. As a guess, what effect would a 40% cut in funding have on your services to students?
9. Can they get these services somewhere else?
10. Can they afford to pay for them?

Can you justify your program?

Finally, if you had to justify your program to an unsympathetic public, what would you say?

11. What short-term measures of success can you point to? (i.e., test scores)
12. What evidence of long-term success do you have? (i.e., educational success, job success, anecdotes about students)
13. What recognition has your program or staff received? (awards, honors, mention in the media, etc.)

Here is part of the "milk group," doing some supermarket research.

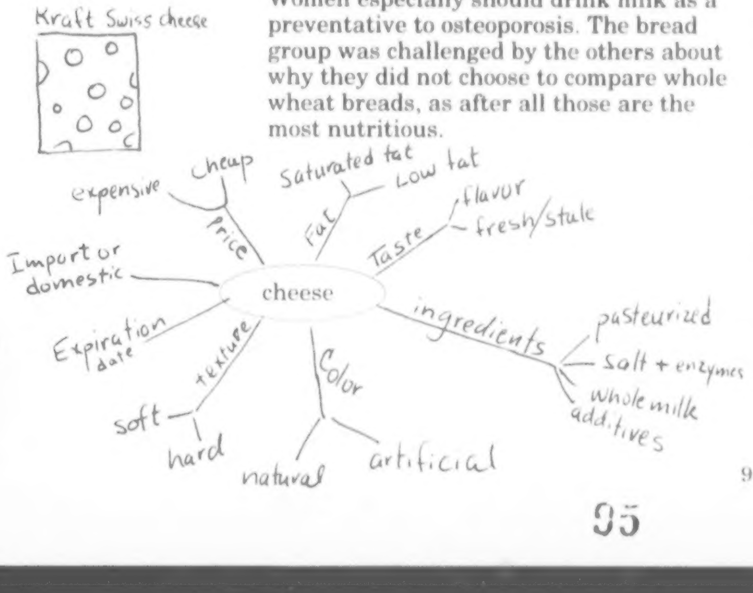
Nutrition concerns

All in all, I learned much from the students by undertaking this project. I was surprised about how important nutrition was to my students. I thought they would be more swayed by taste or price, but that was not the case. They really were interested in reading the package label and recommending products based on nutritional value. The next time I do this project, I would spend more time discussing good nutrition before beginning the project.

In final presentations to the class, the students who compared milk and cheese spoke about how important calcium was. Women especially should drink milk as a preventative to osteoporosis. The bread group was challenged by the others about why they did not choose to compare whole wheat breads, as after all those are the most nutritious.

Below, a "mind map" of the features of cheese, which was the visual for a student presentation. The group's recommended brand is on top.

↓


Kraft Swiss cheese
cheese
Price
expensive
cheap
Fat
Saturated fat
Low fat
Taste
flavor
fresh/stale
Import or domestic
Expiration date
texture
soft
hard
Color
natural
artificial
ingredients
pasteurized
salt + enzymes
whole milk
additives

Media coverage

As a final summary, I had each group prepare an oral report. Although I did bring my camera to the supermarket, I wish I had also camcorded the students while they were making their final presentations to the class. I was very impressed with how most were able to articulate their ideas. Each group had to have a "visual" as part of its report, such as a chart.

Perhaps when classes resume after the break the class could write something on this topic for the school paper. When I repeat this project I will keep this in mind and try to work closer with the faculty member in charge of the paper, so that the students will also have a structured writing assignment connected to this project.

Fun learning

As we progressed with the project the students became more and more interested and involved. I felt they were enjoying what they were doing and not just pleasing their teacher. We could have read product labels and compared products in class without the supermarket and tasting component of the project, but the "hands-on" component of learning would have been missing and that made learning real and fun. ☚

. . .more "Consumer reports"

The milk group presented this chart as a way of comparing several different kinds of milk.

"MiLK"

Brand	taste	Calories	Fat	price	Color	Cholesterol	Vitamin C	Vitamin A	Calcium
Regular (Farmland)	thick	150	12%	93 cents	white	11%	2%	6%	30%
Regular (Parmalat)	like powder	160	12%	99 cents	light white	12%	4%	6%	30%
2% low fat (American Choice)	like regular milk	130	8%	73 cents	light yellow	9%	2%	10%	30%
1% low fat (Parmalat)									

In another class, students investigated hot dogs and came up with this written report:

Hot Dogs

What did you do?

Many people everywhere like hot dogs, but there are many different kinds of hot dogs. Our project was to compare different brands of hot dogs and find out which one is the favorite of those surveyed. We purchased four different kinds of hot dogs and we compared them for nutrition, for taste and cost.

Results

We found that 60% of those surveyed said they prefer the Hebrew National for the taste and beef flavor. The second place was the Nathan's beef franks. In the last place were the chicken and turkey franks because their taste is bland. Also the people cannot distinguish between them which is chicken or turkey franks. We found that the Hebrew National is more expensive, and chicken and turkey franks are cheaper.

What do you recommend, and why?

Our recommendation is the turkey franks based on the nutrition information. They have less:

1. Sodium
2. Fat
3. Cholesterol

But, hot dogs are still no good source of nutrition for your good health.

—Gladys Chavez

Hints & tips

Puppets for kids and adults

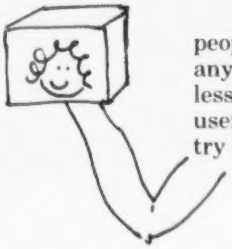
We spoke on the phone recently with **Rae Venus**, who teaches elementary school in Liverpool, New York. She passed along a nifty teaching idea which she heard about recently, and which could be used with any age group.

She uses an empty tissue-box—the ones that are square on all sides (not the oblong ones). Then she pastes a picture on each side of the box that relates to a story. (For example, Papa Bear, Mama Bear, Baby Bear and Goldilocks for the story of the Three Bears.)

A student can put his or her hand into the box and hold it up to display the pictures, resulting in a kind of puppet, but with four options. This "picture box" can be used for all kinds of sequencing activities such as teaching the concept of beginning-middle-end, for story-telling, or for listening practice.

For ESL this "puppet" could be used not only for story-telling but for role-playing and speaking practice. Many teachers have found using puppets a useful technique because it gives the student some distance from the performance, and thus more confidence. The advantage to this four-sided "puppet" is that students also have to make some decisions while they are using it.

The pictures on the box could be of people or of scenes in a story—almost anything depending on the content of the lesson. For this reason, it might be very useful for adult material as well. Why not try it, and let us know?



Questions practice

Carol Wertz, in Shasta Lake, California, sent us a number of good suggestions for helping students to practice forming questions. Try some of these with your students!

- **Rapid questions**—First review the "wh" words (who, what, where, when, why and whow, sorry, we mean 'how.') Then, in teams, students come up with as many questions as they can with the "wh" word the teacher gives them. For example, one team will have to do questions beginning with 'who,' the other team will form questions with 'what,' etc. When they read their answers, the opposing team keeps a two-minute time limit for the team that is speaking.
- **Rapid questions again**—this time with is, are, do and does.
- **Work with pictures**—Looking at pictures, instead of telling about the picture, ask questions about it. After some group practice, they can do this in pairs, with one asking and one answering. (This works for any level of student.)
- **Dictation**—The students could write the questions you dictate about a picture. This models questioning and gives them practice listening and writing. They might also write the answer.
- **"I'm thinking of...(20 Questions)**—One student chooses something in the room and other students question him or her to find out what it is.
- **Questions to answers**—Looking at a picture, the teacher gives an answer, and they must form the question that it answers. (Maybe they've watched *Jeopardy* on T.V. and will be familiar with this process!) This can be verbal or written, depending on the skill level.

Give longer 'wait time'

Here's a trick from the old language-teaching pros. Learn to wait *longer* for your students to respond to a question or request that you make in class.

Studies have shown that even when teachers *think* they are waiting a long time for an answer, in fact they rarely give more than a few seconds before jumping in with some help or with a new or re-phrased question. The reason for this? Most of us are a little uncomfortable with silence.

Remember that even when your students aren't speaking, they are busily processing information or working on something to say. If you give them time to do that, more students will have a chance to give successful responses, or to ask questions themselves.

To extend wait time, ask your question and then try taking several slow breaths before saying anything more. Or, close your eyes and count to ten. Try it—it works!

Tools & techniques:

An ongoing (imaginary) restaurant project

*—by **Kristin Weidlein**, graduate student at the University of Idaho in Moscow, Idaho.*

Here is a teaching idea from an instructor whose students each own an imaginary restaurant! This provides material for various language activities throughout the term. It also provides some continuity to the lessons, allows students to use their creativity, and gives them ownership of the material they work on.

Best of all, it works well with beginners, but can also be used in a multi-level group.

Starting with food

Often one of the first lessons introduced to beginning ESL students includes vocabulary and concepts about food and restaurants. Having your beginning students write a menu for a fabricated restaurant can provide review for food vocabulary, provide an opportunity for group conversations, and give the class original, student-produced material that can be easily integrated into later lessons.

How to do it

For their menu, students supply different types of information about a make-believe restaurant that they own. They decide on a name, an address, and the hours their restaurant will be open. The bulk of the menu is built around what types of food students want to serve in their restaurant. The teacher guides their responses and encourages them to choose foods that could fill the categories of appetizers, meals (main dishes), drinks, and desserts.

A group endeavor

Depending on the level of the students, they can write expanded descriptions of the meals and the ingredients. Small, high-beginning classes could write one menu together; in a larger class the students can be divided into small groups of two to four students and each group can produce a menu.

You can also decide to have students each design their own restaurant—perhaps they would like to try this after working first in a group.

Using the menu

The students in my class will continue to return to their menu throughout the term. For example, when we talk about time we can use the hours of the restaurant as practice material. When we talk about how people are described, we will have imaginary customers come to the restaurant. In addition to describing these "customers," we will order from the menu for them, thus allowing for continued reinforcement of the vocabulary we have learned.

The menu can be expanded as more language is learned. For example, prices can be added for lessons on money, and students can practice writing a bill and making change. Role-play activities can accompany these lessons as well.

Adapting to your students

For higher level students, you can make writing a menu a more challenging task by by adding more detailed items and including prices. Students could build their restaurant around a specific theme, and advanced students could even write a business plan. The possibilities are unlimited.

Related activities:

Vocabulary—Have students list all the items they will need to purchase for the restaurant (such as chairs, tables, fire extinguishers, etc.) and how many of each.

Economics—Have students make an estimated budget for the restaurant (electricity, rent, etc.).

Writing—Discuss how they will get new customers and write an ad (look in the newspapers for examples) or come up with slogans.

Write stories about the customers. Or write a letter from a happy customer and a letter from an angry customer.

Grammar—For practicing comparatives, use two of the student menus and compare prices, quality, style, etc.

Small-group discussion—Work on solving problems such as: "My employees are always late. What can I do?"

Current events—What if your customers get sick from eating at your restaurant? Read newspaper items related to this theme and discuss.

To try this activity with your students, you can use the blank menu on the next page for a starting point.

Have fun, and "bon appétit!"

Congratulations! You are the owner of a new restaurant!

What is the name of the restaurant?
What kind of restaurant is it?
Where is the restaurant?
What are the hours?
What different kinds of food do you serve?

Write a menu for this restaurant.

Menu

Name of Restaurant:

Address:

Hours:

Appetizers

Meals

Desserts

Drinks

News & notes

Looking for info?

The National Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education (NCLE) has five recent "Minibibs" of interest to adult ESL instructors. The minibibs are short, annotated bibliographies of articles and documents on one topic. These include:

- Family ESL Literacy Programs
- Volunteer Tutors and Adult ESL Programs
- ESL Literacy Education in Correctional Institutions
- Workplace ESL Literacy Programs
- Workplace ESL Literacy Guides and Curricula

To receive a free copy of any of the above minibibs, or for a complete list of NCLE publications, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to NCLE, Center for Applied Linguistics, 1118 22nd St., NW, Washington, DC 20037. Or, send an e-mail request to: ncle@cal.org

Teaching numbers

We've learned of a new group of adult educators (GED, ABE, ESL, literacy, etc.) who are interested in networking about teaching basic math skills. They are called the "Adult Numeracy Practitioners Network." They publish a quarterly newsletter, *The Math Practitioner*, and have an electronic list which is: NUMERACY@world.std.com

Membership is open to all parties. If you are interested, contact Esther Leonelli at the Community Learning Center, 19 Brookline St., Cambridge, MA 02139. Phone: 617-349-6363. Esther's e-mail address is: edl@world.std.com

Still time for Minigrants

Hands-on English has a small number of grants available for an instructional project. This year the grants will be for amounts of up to $200 each for materials, books and supplies necessary for each project.

Applications are being mailed out now and are due on April 30th. You are encouraged to apply—please write or call for an application form.

Upcoming conferences

◆ March 28-April 1, 1995—**Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)** 29th annual convention in Long Beach, CA. Call: (703) 836-0774.

◆ April 8, 1995—**Northern New England TESOL** in Portland, ME. Contact Bart Weyand, (207) 780-4419.

◆ April 8, 1995—**Texas TESOL V** (Dallas Area), in Denton, Texas. Contact Sheila McKee, U of North Texas, (817) 565-2004.

◆ April 23-25, 1995—**National Center for Family Literacy** in Louisville, KY. Call: (502) 584-1133.

◆ April 27-29, 1995—**Sunshine State TESOL** in Jacksonville, FL. Contact Dr. Judith B. Strother, F.I.T., (407) 768-8000.

◆ April 29, 1995—**Eastern Pennsylvania TESOL** in Philadelphia, PA. Contact Pairat Sethbakdi, CCP, (215) 751-8330.

◆ April 29, 1995—**Michigan TESOL** in Haslett, Michigan. Contact Betsy Morgan, Eastern Mich. U., (313) 487-0130.

◆ May 5-6, 1995—**Wisconsin TESOL** in Green Bay, Wisc. Contact Barbara Law, U.W. Green Bay, (414) 465-2137.

◆ May 12-13, 1995—**Georgia TESOL** in Athens, GA. Contact Joan Kelly Hall, U. of Georgia, (706) 613-5200.

◆ June 20-24, 1995—**Computer Assisted Language Instruction Consortium (CALICO)** in Middlebury, Vermont. Contact CALICO at (919) 660-3180.

Bad experience?

(We heard this from Tom Leverett in Carbondale, Illinois, who swears it's true!)

A teacher in Chicago was interviewing a new student who kept repeating, "Indiana Police, six months, very bad, very bad," in an attempt to make himself understood. The teacher became upset, thinking that maybe he had been in jail, but it turned out that he had been in Indianapolis. . .

Advertising

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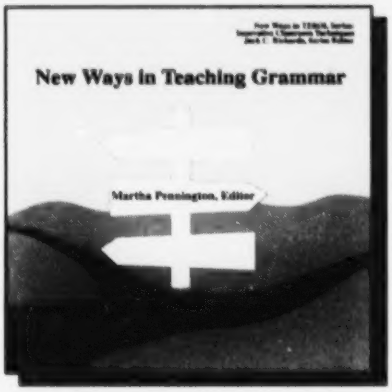

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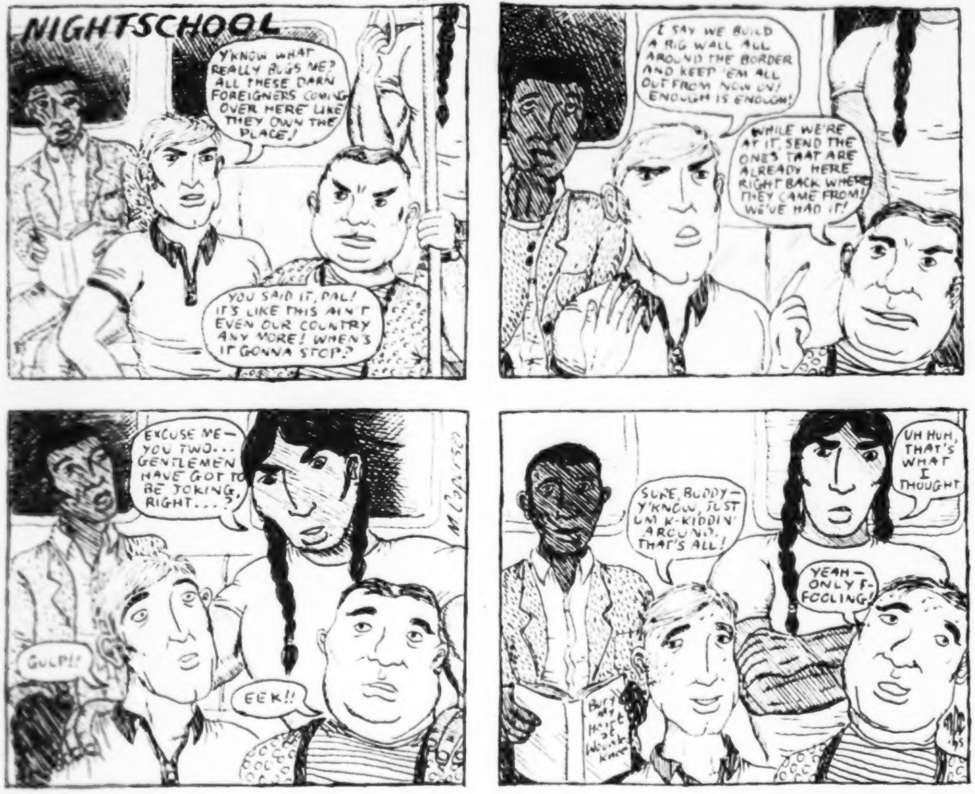
NIGHTSCHOOL
Y'KNOW WHAT REALLY BUGS ME? ALL THESE DARN FOREIGNERS COMING OVER HERE LIKE THEY OWN THE PLACE!
YOU SAID IT, PAL! IT'S LIKE THIS AIN'T EVEN OUR COUNTRY ANY MORE! WHEN'S IT GONNA STOP?
I SAY WE BUILD A BIG WALL ALL AROUND THE BORDER AND KEEP 'EM ALL OUT FROM NOW ON! ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!
WHILE WE'RE AT IT, SEND THE ONES THAT ARE ALREADY HERE RIGHT BACK WHERE THEY CAME FROM! WE'VE HAD IT!
EXCUSE ME— YOU TWO... GENTLEMEN HAVE GOT TO BE JOKING, RIGHT...?
GULP!!
EEK!!
SURE, BUDDY— Y'KNOW, JUST UM K-KIDDIN' AROUND, THAT'S ALL!
UH HUH, THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT
YEAH— ONLY F-FOOLING!
Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee

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